CROUCH MEMORIAL
LIBRARY FUND

Accession No. _____

Date _____

THE PHILOSOPHIC BASIS

OF

MORAL OBLIGATION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

An Examination of William James's Philosophy. Crown 8vo. Cloth. 4s. 6d. net.

"Mr. Turner is to be congratulated . . . an admirable epitome of James's views. . . . He displays, too, something of James's own charm of style."—*The New Witness.*

"A narrative that is really for the general reader, and is couched in English and not in the jargon of conflicting schools."—*The Contemporary Review.*

"Language as clear as James."—*The Athenæum.*

"He writes finely."—*The New Age.*

OXFORD: BASIL BLACKWELL.

THE PHILOSOPHIC BASIS OF MORAL OBLIGATION

A STUDY IN ETHICS

BY

J. E. TURNER, M.A.

Lecturer in Philosophy and Psychology, University Extension Board, University of Liverpool

AUTHOR OF

"AN EXAMINATION OF WILLIAM JAMES'S PHILOSOPHY"

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1924

BJ
1011
T8
1924

QZ5
I85
BOWER
LIBRARY

COPYRIGHT

BERKELEY BAPTIST
DIVINITY SCHOOL
LIBRARY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

1510

In Memoriam

G

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

PREFACE

I FEEL that the length of this consideration of only one aspect of ethical theory requires some justification. Modern ethics then, in my opinion, suffers from its adherence to too restricted a standpoint wherefrom to undertake the analysis of its specific problems.[1] This limitation, no doubt, has been inevitable. But the rapid increase of scientific knowledge, and more especially the unceasing growth of interconnections between all the sciences themselves, seem to open out a fresh field for philosophic speculation which must, again, bear intimately upon the fundamentals of ethics. I have sought, therefore, to base my own conclusions upon a general survey of the logical implications of modern knowledge. For while the facts themselves may lack direct ethical significance, still when taken all together they constitute a body of evidence of the highest possible value for moral theory; and this belief must form the justification for my frequent references to scientific dicta.

I have endeavoured, in short, to discover a broader basis than has been customary for certain fundamental moral principles; and in this respect I believe that the

[1] Cf. Chaps. XIII. p. 134; XV. p. 156.

arguments advanced for the logical necessity of the Conservation of Values, and of progressive heterogeneity and specialisation, are new;[1] and if they are considered worthy of discussion I should feel grateful for criticism.

Further, I have in the main restricted my treatment, as the title indicates, to the *basis* of moral obligation, and have not dealt explicitly with its specific applications, as these bear upon such problems as prohibition or suicide or divorce. For while these aspects are inseparably connected, still the basis of obligation possesses an obvious logical priority; while its practical implications have been sufficiently dealt with, both in general and in detail, by many recent writers. But the principle of obligation, as obligation, appears to me to lack philosophical, as distinct from religious, substantiation. This view, however, must not be taken to mean that my own enquiry has been undertaken in order to provide philosophic support for religious beliefs which had been accepted in advance. So far as this consideration is at all pertinent, the reverse is true; for the original bias, if any there were, was distinctly heterodox, if not indeed anti-religious.

That the element of obligation, as such, has been inadequately emphasised by recent ethical thinkers seems to me to be clear from such typical passages as the following. "Can the postulate of perfection, or principle of a supreme good, really dominate conduct?" asks Professor Boyce Gibson. "Can it

[1] Chaps. VII. to XI.

efficiently play the part of a standard or criterion of right action?" Again, "In (man) independence becomes freedom. He defines his own ideals, and acts in obedience to ends he himself has set up. The immanence of the activity of the universe becomes in man an activity that is free";[1] and the modern attitude, I think, may be summed up in the article on Moral Obligation in Hastings' *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*. Here we find that "moral obligation may be said to so far defy any further ultimate analysis, and its origin is as mysterious as are all other origins." Among earlier writers, again, neither Spinoza nor Rousseau nor Comte exhibits any ultimate ground of obligation, as such, and as distinct from intuition or religion; while Hegel's standpoint is thus represented by Professor Reyburn: "The law is binding because each subject lays it on himself . . . the moral will therefore is inaccessible."[2]

These characteristic modern principles are, of course, unquestionably true. Nevertheless they seem to me to be lacking in emphasis upon obligation *as* obligation. We find perfection, good, right, freedom, self-constituted ideals, but not, so far as I can perceive, pure obligation. It is then with a sense of this defect in recent speculation that I have myself approached the subject; I hope I have done no injustice to any of the writers to whom I am, in all other respects, deeply indebted. I may add that many of

[1] *Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 38. Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 153.

[2] *The Ethical Theory of Hegel*, p. 163.

the philosophical and scientific quotations were discovered and appropriated after my own work was completed, and have been included as evidence that my contentions are not altogether without weighty support.

It will be obvious to all who are familiar with modern Philosophy that my general position rests on the Idealism—that tragically misunderstood term—of Hegel and his English representatives; subject, of course, to the proviso just indicated as to obligation. My more special indebtedness in this respect is sufficiently apparent, I believe, in the footnotes and references.

Finally, I welcome this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to Professor Alexander Mair, of Liverpool University, for his unfailing kindness and interest, and for the many valuable suggestions I have received from him in the discussion of philosophical principles; and with his name I should like to link those of Mr. G. C. Field, Mr. W. O. Stapledon, and Mr. H. H. Price, whose acute criticisms have frequently revealed defects in my own treatment of important points; while my thanks are also due to my son for his assistance in dealing with the proofs, and to the printers for the rapidity and accuracy with which their task has been performed.

J. E. TURNER.

LIVERPOOL,
August 15, 1923.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
1.	Introduction—Knowledge and Certainty	1
2.	Certainty in Ethics	11
3.	"Content" and "Form" in Ethics.	20
4.	Prolegomena to Moral Obligation	28
5.	The Starting-point of Enquiry	41
6.	The Direction of World Development	49
7.	The Conservation of Value—I.	59
8.	The Conservation of Value—II.	73
9.	Determination, Necessity and Freedom	85
10.	Necessity and Freedom reconciled—I.	97
11.	Necessity and Freedom reconciled—II.	107
12.	Consciousness and Self-determination	121
13.	Desire, Reason and Value	134
14.	The Objectivity of Value	146
15.	Value as an Ethical Criterion	156
16.	Thought and Intuition	167
17.	The Nature of Value	179
18.	Knowledge and the Real World	187
19.	Monism and Pluralism—Substance and Subject	197

CHAP. PAGE

20. The Ultimate Basis of Value . . . 212

21. Reality as Absolute and Whole . . . 222

22. Reason, Value and Personality . . . 231

23. From Reason to Obligation . . . 242

24. The Ultimate Basis of Moral Obligation . . 260

25. Final Considerations 272

Index 279

I

INTRODUCTION. KNOWLEDGE AND CERTAINTY

The crucial problem of ethics, as considered from the primarily philosophical standpoint rather than the religious, consists in the correlation of the principle of moral freedom with that of moral obligation. There is always a strong tendency to subordinate one of these fundamentals to the other—which, depends in the end on that complex body of influences which determine the "spirit of the age," or of any dominant system of thought or religion. It is true that this tendency may not be apparent at first glance; for both characteristics are instinctively felt to be equally indispensable to any complete theory of human nature and conduct; the sacrifice of either therefore is rarely open and explicit; but its implicit presence is detected by competent criticism, and is only concealed by argumentative devices which may possess some cogency or may descend to mere lip-service. Thus every age of authority, whether in thought or in national or religious polity, finds it difficult to conserve real individual freedom, as is sufficiently evidenced by the recurrent rebellions against political or ecclesiastical despotism. Every such demand for liberty, on the other hand, carries its defiance of authority

to extremes often enough disastrous; and yet few theoretic defences of either course ever advocate the complete suppression of authority or of freedom; only in the cruder forms of predestination, or in the platitudes of theoretical anarchists, is such a suggestion to be found.

It is inevitable then that in this age of individual freedom, of advancing democracy, the principle of moral obligation, in any literal sense of the term, should be confused and insufficiently emphasised; and all the more so because the humanistic influences which bring about this result are themselves healthy and well grounded. Legal procedure is becoming more rational and merciful; the rights of minorities are accorded increasing consideration; parental control is relaxing and the social code of disapproval becoming more elastic. This by no means implies that the general sense of duty, as such, is weakening; the response to the demands of national necessity during the war suffices to prove the falsity of such an impression. Still it remains true that in recent moral theory the factor of obligation has fallen largely into the background. Professor Webb has pointed out, with reference to one of the dominating systems of the last century, that "the Utilitarian tradition could never find a place for a genuine ought";[1] and his assertion is amply justified by Mill's account of the sanctions of duty. "The internal sanction of duty . . . is a feeling in our own mind. . . . The ultimate sanction therefore of all morality . . . being a subjective feeling in our minds. . . . In the last resort, the feeling of duty depends upon . . . social feeling or sympathy."[2]

[1] *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xx. p. 119.

[2] *Utilitarianism*, pp. 40, 42, 50.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the conclusions of so able a logician as Mill always express a profound truth; and this raises a further difficulty which faces any advocacy of the ethical factor of *objective* obligation, as distinct from the subjective grounds assigned by him—the suspicion that the only ultimate foundation that can be advanced for it must take, in the end, a form never properly philosophical but rather akin to the non-rational dogmatism of many religious truths. This impression, once again, finds much to support it in the history of ethical theory itself, and expresses the too-often-forgotten principle that philosophy must never betray its own character by assuming the guise of mysticism in the hope of thereby acquiring its irrefragable certainty. For in connection with both the subject of this enquiry and the allied problem of the freedom of will, thinkers have been too prone to imagine that mere insistence upon a principle, if it is only made emphatic enough, provides a satisfactory substitute for logical grounds. The inevitable result, of course, is the defeat of their own aims and a total failure to achieve the purpose they had in view; and their philosophy, instead of being a complete and coherent system, loses much of its value simply because, at the most critical stage in the entire argument, the principles which lie at the base of their self-chosen standpoint are abandoned.

I hope that I have myself avoided so fatal an error of method. I have endeavoured throughout to adhere strictly to the philosophic point of view, which implies, I take it, the establishment of results by means of logical argument, although by "logical" I mean very much more than what is possible in and through formal demonstration.

Fortunately for my purpose in this respect, modern logic has gained immeasurably both in its depth and its range; it has come, thanks to our national exponents of the Idealism of Plato, Aristotle and Hegel, to denote every mode of the systematically developing and self-coherent activity of mind under whatever definite forms this may express and manifest itself. Thus the familiar methods—and with the familiarity has too often been allied the proverbial contempt—of deduction and induction, of mathematical and syllogistic demonstration, have been transcended, but not abandoned; they have been assigned their limitations and their proper value as indispensable but by no means exhaustive or final devices which achieve, under certain definite conditions, that immanent interconnectedness which characterises Reality, and which must therefore also characterise knowledge. To assert therefore that Logic is in some manner identical with Philosophy requires to-day but slight apology, although I have no doubt that in many quarters the statement will be regarded as patently absurd and as implying either a totally illegitimate expansion of the term "Logic" or a limitation, equally ridiculous, of "Philosophy." I admit that the identity here claimed between them is subject to qualifications whose consideration would, however, merely elucidate the truer nature of both cultures; but any detailed discussion of these points would raise far too wide an enquiry into epistemology to be entered upon here. I venture to say, however, that any blunt or absolute denial of such a coincidence merely betrays a profound misunderstanding of the proper nature of Philosophy. Nor is this principle by any means exclusively modern. It was definitely and emphatically advanced by Hegel

himself in terms that leave no room for misunderstanding.

"Logic coincides with Metaphysics, the science of things set and held in thoughts—thoughts accredited able to express the essential reality of things";[1] and here our attention must be directed to the relation posited by Hegel between "thought" and "things." For "no philosophical doctrine has been more misrepresented," asserts Lord Haldane, "or given to the world in a more distorted form than has been Hegelianism in current literature."[2] It is a most timely and weighty protest, and until it is heeded modern philosophy will continue to be the poorer. Dr. Bosanquet, again, traces the essential principles involved to Plato. "We have the inevitable line of thought definitely traced in Plato in the whole evolution of his logical theory";[3] and to cite further quotations to the same effect would be an easy matter. But when a leading musical critic, whose competence is unquestionable, says that "Wagner had by instinct the desire for flawless logic in music,"[4] this may be supererogation; for once it is recognised that music falls under the sway of an inexorable logic little more remains to be insisted upon, unless it be the expansion of the principle to include the whole universe of Art.

Logic, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Art—these then are all in some measure identical. But thus to introduce Metaphysics seems to commit ourselves at once either to abstractions or to extravagances, if not indeed to both together. But it is surely time that serious

[1] *Logic* (Wallace), sec. 24.

[2] *The Reign of Relativity*, p. 344.

[3] *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 44.

[4] Mr. Ernest Newman. I may add a later dictum:—"The only thing that can give life to a piece of music is the *idea*" (*Manchester Guardian*, June 15, 1922).

students of vitally important subjects should refuse to allow themselves to be any longer deceived by the superficial misapplication of a valuable term, and its senseless use as a derisive label for a suppositious thinker who evolves a zoo from his inner consciousness.[1] Metaphysics means simply ultimacy—fundamentality; it merely implies carrying forward our enquiries as far as reason and sincerity will take us. Every branch of investigation, without exception, must of its very self become metaphysical if it is extended far enough. How far we choose to go is, after all, largely a matter of choice or of temperament; but if the scientist, the economist, even the scientific moralist —and the scope of scientific method in ethics is very wide—is not forced to go the whole way with the metaphysician, why, on the other hand, should the latter passively obey any peremptory challenge to "Halt, or I fire"? The distinction is never more than one of degree. There is nowhere any absolute line of separation; and with special reference to the relation between metaphysics and ethics, it is sufficient, I think, to fall back upon the position already taken up by Professor Boyce Gibson. "The contention is not that ethics is a deduction from an achieved metaphysic, but that some kind of philosophic enquiry is imperative"[2]—an enquiry, therefore, whose results have not been in any way determined in advance by any "abstract postulates" or "laws of thought."

[1] It is perhaps impossible to refute the widespread impression that Hegel, and the Hegelian school generally, indulge in this pastime. Still, Caird's words may be cited:—"that Hegel tries to spin the universe out of his brain is against his own account of his method and also his own practice. . . . He says that philosophy is not standing on one's head for once in a way for a variety" (*Life of Edward Caird*, p. 168). Mr. Bradley's characteristic defence of the metaphysician in the Introduction to *Appearance and Reality* is, I hope, too well known to require quoting.

[2] *A Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 37.

I shall, however, return to these points in a later chapter.

The transition, finally, from metaphysics to that ideal goal of all our investigations—to certainty—is obvious and inevitable. The nature of certainty is a problem which in itself illustrates still further the essential interconnection, already insisted upon, between Logic and Philosophy. That it is a logical category is undeniable; and then we need, further, but recognise that the critique of certainty, initiated at the dawn of distinctively modern Philosophy by Descartes[1] with reference to the dogmatics of Scholasticism, has ever since his day constituted a governing determinant of all our thinking. Locke went so far as wholly to identify knowledge with certainty: "with me, to know and to be certain is the same thing; what I am certain of, that I know; what comes short of certainty cannot be called knowledge."[2] It will be pointed out, doubtless, that so extreme a position involved the Lockean conclusion that the real existence of the physical universe became a matter of mere opinion or belief instead of definite knowledge, and that if such an identity between knowledge and certainty is still maintained, the same fate must overtake all ethical principles. How far this is true is another question which demands epistemological prolegomena too lengthy for this occasion. It must be sufficient to remark that Locke's contention has more substance than is usually admitted. Knowledge and certainty, at least, are convergent even if, in our finite world, they remain asymptotical. For the expanded scope of

[1] J. Caird has drawn an interesting parallel between Cartesianism and Protestantism in his little volume on *Spinoza*, chap. v.

[2] *Works*, vol. iv. p. 145.

modern Logic, to which attention has already been drawn, implies that the accepted forms and canons of certainty must now be ranked, along with their allied mathematical and quasi-mathematical ratiocinative processes, as merely special modes, determined by definite conditions, of a quality or attribute which pertains in principle—as indeed Locke maintained—to the entire universe of reason. Once again there is in this contention nothing new, though it would seem to be less familiar than it should be; and I think it would be impossible to find a clearer presentation of the true nature of philosophic certainty than that given by Hegel in his discussion of the category of Quantity. To regard morality and freedom, he there insists, "because they cannot be expressed in a mathematical formula, (as) beyond the reach of exact knowledge," is nothing but "bad metaphysics"; so that there is even here no escape, after all, from metaphysics in itself; there is simply its unconscious adoption under an inadequate form. Exact knowledge or certainty, in other words, is attained only when any "particular thought is founded in universal thought, and in that way necessary"; [1] it is never, that is, the innate attribute of any given principle in itself or as such, but on the contrary it is a quality which springs solely from all the relations subsisting between such a principle and the entire universe of reason. Our apprehension of certainty varies directly therefore with our apprehension of these relations; wherever these are themselves comparatively few in number and definite in form, we then readily perceive what is variously termed immediate certainty, self-evidence, mathematical or logical necessity. But the boundaries of

[1] *Logic* (Wallace), sec. 99.

this sphere of finally established truth are never rigid but rather always fluent; they expand *pari passu* with the development of the whole of knowledge,[1] in such a way that there is never any such absolute distinction as is commonly supposed between *a priori* truth and *a posteriori*. "The *a priori* is merely what comes clear and connected out of the mass of the *a posteriori*."[2] Certainty then, to conclude, is not the peculiar characteristic of a body of knowledge which is, as it were, *sui generis*; it is altogether a matter of degree, of a constantly shifting boundary-line between our defective, and our completer, knowledge; it is the index of the extent to which clarity has been imposed upon the "mass." "Degrees of certainty arise from the logical consciousness that the individual's knowledge is but imperfectly identified with the ideal judgement which would qualify Reality by the complete content of Reality."[3] And this view, further, is by no means confined to what has been called—or miscalled—the "intellectualist" or "absolutist" school. It is accepted, in principle, by so competent and convinced a critic of that philosophy as Bergson. "We possess," he asserts, "even now a certain number of *lines of facts* . . . which we can prolong hypothetically. . . . Taking them all together, they will, by their convergence, bring before us such an accumulation of probabilities that we shall feel on the road to certitude."[4]

Any further detailed consideration of the philosophy

[1] "Science always tends to mathematics as to an ideal."—Bergson, *Mind-Energy*, p. 70. It seems to me only necessary to follow out the implications of this principle to discover the root-fallacy of Bergson's indictment of "intellect." *Cf.* further, p. 25 below.

[2] Dr. Bosanquet, *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 127. *Cf.* p. 14:—"the *a priori* character lies simply in the absence of complication and confusion."

[3] Dr. Bosanquet, *Logic*, vol. i. p. 376; slightly abridged. *Cf.* the entire chapter.

[4] *Mind-Energy*, p. 4. *Cf.* my previous quotation.

of certainty, however, would involve the development of a pure theory of knowledge. I may, then, summarise my position thus far as expressing (first) the validity of a metaphysical, as distinct from a strictly scientific, treatment of ethical problems; on this more will be said in the succeeding chapter; and (secondly) the principle that certainty is not a characteristic peculiar only to truths that are mathematical or logical, but that it may pertain equally to moral or ethical truths.[1] Such truths, in other words, are not excluded, from the very outset and in their own nature, from all possibility of attaining to certainty; this possibility remains always open to the enquirer; but whether it is ever actually achieved or not is of course to be determined—again as in mathematics, logic, and the physical sciences—by the critical analysis of their self-coherence, their non-contradiction, and the test of their practical applicability and success. The connection between certainty and ethics therefore will constitute the subject of the following chapter.

[1] *Cf.* Dr. Bosanquet, *Logic*, vol. i. p. 134:—"the element of necessity, the occasion of the most fundamental crux for logic as for ethics."

II

CERTAINTY IN ETHICS

In the correspondence which passed between Professor Henry Sidgwick and Mr. F. W. H. Myers there occurs an arresting passage which runs as follows:—"My difficulty is that I cannot give to principles of conduct either the formal certainty that comes from exact science or the practical certainty that comes from a real consensus of experts";[1] a remarkable utterance in the case of any ethicist, but doubly so coming from a thinker of Sidgwick's calibre. His difficulty is plainly fundamental; it concerns

> the ground
> Of obligation, what the rule and whence
> The sanction.[2]

It is one of those crucial matters on which the whole possibility of progress depends—progress in thought at least if not in action.

That this problem of the nature of certainty in its *intellectual* aspect has either been actually solved, or is at least (in principle) capable of solution, many recent "isms" emphatically proclaim; if they would but agree in their conflicting conclusions, the age-long search would be ended. When we turn to the *ethical*

[1] *Henry Sidgwick: A Memoir*, p. 259. *Cf.* further on the "consensus" p. 19 below.
[2] Wordsworth, *Prelude*, xi. 298.

sphere, therefore, the contrast is all the more impressive; few systems, if indeed any, will claim to have attained the moral certainty desired, but in vain, by Sidgwick. At first sight, indeed, the converse of such a situation would appear to be the more natural; it might pardonably have been presumed, *a priori*, that the rules of conduct would be ascertained before the laws of thought; that by now we should know exactly what to do, even if we were uncertain what to believe. The proved falsity of this anticipation sufficiently indicates the complexity of the ethical problem, which is by no means the simple matter that moral enthusiasm so often takes it to be. Rather it raises the deepest issues in philosophy, sums up within itself all other enquiries, and connects itself closely with the ultimate nature of reality;[1] and thus man, in a sense, becomes again the measure of all things. A false economy of thought—preliminary canons of limitation—must therefore from the outset be carefully avoided.

But at a time when every advance in knowledge, both practical and theoretical, unfailingly brings with it some measure of wider certainty, its marked absence from ethical speculation may justify the doubt as to its very possibility in that sphere. Why should certitude prove so evasive here?—to such a degree indeed that the longer practice continues, the more dubious and unreliable many of our accepted principles come to appear. For although social unrest and political instability are preferable to stagnation, still they indicate a feeble grasp of certain fundamental truths which in

[1] *Cf.* "What does it matter whether we call Conscience Reason or Moral Sense? There is hardly another inquiry of such momentous import" (Dean Hastings Rashdall, *Is Conscience an Emotion?* p. 5).

essence are moral; and too often the "rights of man" prove to be the wrongs of humanity. It may be advisable therefore to consider in the first place the nature of such certainty as we may presume to be attainable in this field of enquiry.

We must ask then, to begin with, if the common distinction—adopted, as the quotation evidences, by Sidgwick—between formal and practical certainty has any basis in principle, apart, that is, from the insistent demands of life and action; and the reply must be, I think, in the negative. There is in the end, *i.e.*, only one basal type of real certainty; and this, but only after a careful elucidation of the true import of the term, is best called "formal." It has already been argued in the preceding chapter that any distinction between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* can never be more than one of degree. "Actual certainty"—to express this contention in the words of an idealist logician—"is a matter of degree, depending on the distinctness of the systematic organisation within the immediate whole on which it reposes."[1] Now the term "form" denotes, at least as one aspect of its meaning, what is here called "distinctness"—either distinctness of external outline and exterior relation, or, what is really but a more inclusive category, "distinctness of systematic organisation within the whole"; for it is to a whole or system of some kind or other that we are carried in the end. The less the degree of distinctness, in short, the more inferior is an object's "form." But "form" is generally very sharply distinguished again from "matter," and equally so "formal" from "practical" or "material." And yet the certainty which we call "practical" is always and at its best but

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 13.

a makeshift, accepted perforce when the "formal" is unattainable. Whenever it becomes possible to do so, we supplement or replace it by the theoretical;[1] and even when this cannot be done explicitly, still the absence of the latter is felt as a defect, and its possibility, under appropriate conditions, implied; of this attitude the whole progress and tendency of modern thought in all its phases furnish ample evidence, in spite of the contentions of both intuitionists and pragmatists.[2]

But even admitting that there exists only a single type of final certainty, it may still be objected that this cannot properly be called "formal." This contention only has weight, however, if by "formal" is meant merely the abstract. And any such interpretation, however legitimate it may be under certain circumstances, completely fails to do proper justice to the conception of "form"; for either it severs form altogether from content, or it connects it only with a species of content which, on account of its emptiness and limitation, scarcely deserves to be called such. That this is the case is evident, *e.g.* in the passage already quoted from Sidgwick; for he speaks of the "formal certainty that comes from exact science." But "exact science" constitutes, obviously and unfortunately, only a small portion of the whole of our knowledge, simply because it is, under the present conditions of actual experience, necessarily confined to superficial and abstract attributes of reality—to content, *i.e.* which is extremely limited in its depth and value. But, on the other hand, this very superficiality or simplicity in itself has one highly important advantage; for it enables us easily to perceive that the

[1] A theory must, however, be distinguished from a hypothesis.

[2] *Cf.* page 24 below on the significance of the recent advances in exact science.

connection between the "content," as such, and the "form" which it assumes, is of the most intimate character and is indeed indestructible; so that in the end form and content either become here identical, or (what is the same thing) they remain distinguishable only as diverse aspects of one and the same reality; only as different ways of viewing one and the same situation, or as the same entity considered from two different standpoints. As our knowledge becomes more exact therefore, the more does its content assume a fixed and unchangeable form; every expansion in its volume leading to greater stability in this respect, and every modification of the form again having as its aim a higher degree of internal structural finality; until in the end it becomes impossible, if we desire to achieve the highest type of truth, even to conceive of any further alteration whatever, as may be seen in the history of mathematics and its applications.

Thus certainty, as the ultimate ideal of all knowledge, is seen to imply the inseparability of "form" from "content," or from "matter." These are always relative and relevant to one another, in such a way that every specific kind of content demands for its truest expression an equally definite type of form. We may apply here Hegel's dictum—though it appears to refer in itself to a different problem—that "no formless matter appears anywhere";[1] or alternatively, "the form is the spirit of the matter, and the matter is inexhaustible."[2] It is from this inexhaustibility of the

[1] *Logic*, sec. 128.

[2] Dr. Bosanquet, *Implication*, p. 164. Contrast Mr. Bertrand Russell's standpoint as presented by Professor Hoernlé:—"Pure philosophy deals wholly with abstract general forms. . . . Form and content are sharply sundered and independent one of the other" (*Studies in Contemporary Metaphysics*, p. 35).

matter (or content) of possible knowledge, transcending as it plainly does all finite intelligence, that there results the present narrow range of the "exact" sciences. Supremely difficult as their problems are, their intricacy should not blind us to the truth that they concern after all the least concrete only of all real phenomena; they describe, as it were, merely the skeleton of the vast organism of total reality. The systems therefore with which modern exact science is adequate exhaustively to deal are "wholes very simply conceived—facile and transparent cases, not the most valuable";[1] and it should be unnecessary to add that this position implies no depreciation whatever of such knowledge, but rather, on the contrary, emphasises by implication and contrast the infinite complexity of the universe taken in its entirety.

Thus when (in the first place) the elements of our experience are relatively few and simple, the inseparability or even the identity of content and form becomes patent. But this is equally obvious in a totally different sphere—a sphere in which, however, to heighten the contrast, the content itself becomes extremely complex; that is in all departments of Art. Dissimilar in so many respects as are art and exact science, and although art welcomes an abundance which these sciences must shun, they nevertheless agree in one aspect—in that relation of congruence or essential agreement which they maintain between their content and its form; their common aim being to bestow on their characteristic material its only proper and valid structure and organisation. In spite of the antithesis between the tropic exuberance of art and the frigid austerity of science, they share one common function—that of true

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *ibid.* p. 103.

and adequately final expression.[1] In exact science, owing to its unavoidable paucity of content, form certainly comes to exercise a dominance which is, however, much more apparent than real; but artistic form is nothing other than the actual content itself when this has attained full self-relation. Here "form" is easily—indeed inevitably—translated into terms of "content"; it is its rejection and retention, the removal of superfluity and incongruity, the selection of just such material as is fully adequate to the ideal which must be embodied. "Every definite content," as Hegel has pointed out in his analysis of the nature of Art, "determines a form suitable to it."[2]

This parallelism may indeed be carried yet further, to include an *artistic certainty*; for the "sure touch," that prerogative of genius, is more than a mere figure of speech; it stands for characteristics which have become identified by the unfailing instinct of mankind, although unconsciously, with the finality of Nature in many of her aspects. For like these, the supreme creations of art possess an eternal logic of their own; equally immune from change or challenge, to alter them were sacrilege.[3] Beauty is universal, like gravitation; an ode of Shelley or of Keats as unalterable as the law of excluded middle. Foreign to each other as these appear, they still share a common nature; for

[1] "The *Divine Poem*," says Ernest Newman, "shows Scriabine in one phase of disequilibrium; his musical language is not rich and varied enough to express his philosophy. In the *Poem of Ecstasy* the equilibration of thought and language is perfect" (*Manchester Guardian*, March 17, 1921).

[2] Introduction to *Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art*, p. 60.

[3] Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask. Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge.

"Though the world's reasons for its verdicts on works of art may be worth little, its mere verdict is worth much" (Professor A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 282).

in both alike content and form have become welded into an indivisible unity; and the measure in which either may fail to impress us is but the mark of the mind's arrested growth. "When poetry is purely or almost purely poetic," says Professor A. C. Bradley, "we find the identity of form and content; and the degree of purity may be tested by the degree in which we feel it hopeless to convey the effect of a poem in any form but its own. Where the notion of doing so is simply ludicrous, you have quintessential poetry." [1]

If then we trace in this way the full implication of the idea of form, the adoption of the term "formal" to denote the only real type of certainty finds its justification; for it signifies those elements of finality and assurance which are inseparable from all form that fully responds to the nature of its particular content. This content then becomes the sole determinant of the formal development; so that while thought builds with the rigid steel of logic, emotion weaves the gold of music into filigree. But when form and content are thus indissolubly united in one whole, there remains nothing which can be placed over against them; the antithesis therefore between formal and practical certainty at once vanishes. The latter, always something of a misnomer, becomes, when taken strictly, an actual contradiction in terms, its sole justification being our inability in everyday affairs (where complexity becomes almost chaotic) to act without it; so that the "consensus of experts," in those rare instances when it amounts to anything more than an agreement to differ, is our only resource.

And in ethical speculation, unfortunately, even

[1] *Ibid.* p. 22.

this doubtful resource fails us.[1] Experts, if indeed any exist, are few in number, while their personal convictions are much firmer, and their mutual antagonism therefore far more violent, than in almost any other region of thought. Thus deprived of assured practical foundations—lacking Sidgwick's "consensus of experts"[2]—ethical certainty must obviously either be formal, or it must be wholly unattainable; in which case it must become, as indeed Professor A. E. Taylor has explicitly maintained, a matter of compromise; "resting entirely upon a basis of everyday generalisation from experience, its hypotheses merely provisional, none of its leading concepts will stand metaphysical criticism."[3] And if, dissatisfied with this conclusion, we turn in search of a certainty that shall be final, we at once confront a further serious difficulty. For final certainty means (as I have maintained) formal certainty; but if again form depends upon and is indeed one with content, then we are driven to ask (first) with what precise content ethics is concerned, and (secondly) in what way, if at all, this can be so dealt with as to yield the desired formal certainty.

[1] It would appear to be absent also, to some extent at least, even in exact science. "The consensus," states Dr. N. R. Campbell, "is only a consensus of experts. And it does not exist" (*Physics, The Elements*, p. 21).

[2] This was, however, Aristotle's criterion. "The rule of right conduct is given by the consensus of opinion in the society in which the agent lives. It is necessarily implied that the standard is variable" (T. Marshall, *Aristotle's Theory of Conduct*, p. 19). Marshall further points out that Aristotle's purpose was very limited (p. 21).

[3] "As we have often insisted, any workable ethical theory must be at heart a compromise" (*The Problem of Conduct*, pp. 309, 379).

III

"CONTENT" AND "FORM" IN ETHICS

But before undertaking these enquiries in any detail, two further considerations inevitably suggest themselves. The first is that no matter how full and concrete may be the meaning assigned to the term "formal," this prior exclusion of every other type of certainty is really nothing but a renewed attempt either to merge ethics altogether in metaphysics, or at least to base moral truths on philosophical principles; a standpoint maintained or criticised since the dawn of philosophy, by the different schools of thought. The position assumed on this question is obviously of fundamental importance, determining the entire method of treatment from the outset. It can only be properly dealt with, however, in and through the detailed analysis of the problems as they arise, and little that is of real value can be said in advance. It is certainly not implied by this that the ultimate *results* of the enquiry are in any degree predetermined; for that would be sheer unphilosophical dogmatism of the worst kind. Very much depends here, as in the case of "formal," on the meaning of the word "metaphysics" itself. But it is a term with which we cannot wholly dispense. The leader of the associationist school in Philosophy and of the utilitarian moralists can never

be regarded as unduly biassed in favour of even a sound metaphysics. He has pointed out, however, that "the difficulties of Metaphysics lie at the root of all science; until they are resolved, positively if possible, but at any rate negatively, we are never assured that any human knowledge stands on solid foundations";[1] and it would be difficult, all things considered, to adduce an abler or a more moderate witness to the necessity and value of this type of ultimate enquiry.

Metaphysics is to the mind what air is to the lungs; and both are much the better for constant ventilation; but it is no more possible to think pure metaphysics than it is to exist in pure oxygen. Our metaphysics, *i.e.*, must be based upon, and not be itself prior to, concrete experience; but such experience, on the other hand, demands incessant regulation by the fullest metaphysics at our command, without which we can but fall back on the dead reckoning of probability. Professor A. E. Taylor has very forcibly criticised the entire conception and methods of metaphysical ethics; but whether this in itself be sound or not, the consequence of its failure or abandonment, as my previous quotations sufficiently prove,[2] are beyond question. And indispensable as is the alternative inductive cultus to which Professor Taylor seeks to direct our investigation,[3] increasingly fruitful as this has proved itself to be since he wrote, still the method itself is in no sense new; it is merely a further extension of Bacon's scientific pragmatism, and its results share the defects of all science, as such, in general. What these defects are is sufficiently well expressed by Professor Taylor

[1] J. S. Mill, *Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 2.
[2] *Cf.* above, p. 19.
[3] *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 87.

himself,[1] and may be summed up by saying that every departmental study must in the end and without any exception transcend itself in order to avoid contradiction and inconsistency; a conclusion obviously identical with that of Mill and indicating a necessity, further, which is intensified rather than diminished by every extension of our scientific knowledge as such. Modern science, undoubtedly, is apt to be overwhelmed by its very data, whose volume has so outgrown organisation that its many branches are far too loosely co-ordinated; and although this is in a sense a merit rather than a reproach, still the ideal of those earlier thinkers to whom, necessarily ignorant as they were of the imminent extensions of our knowledge, philosophy presented itself as *scientia scientiarum*, must be admitted to retain some measure of desirability.[2]

For it is as easy in philosophy as in politics to air in "the steady lights of after knowledge" an *ex post facto* wisdom. Because the tendency—the ineradicable tendency—of thought towards finality has not yet completely achieved its end, it does not therefore follow that it is inherently vicious and for ever doomed to fail.[3] Undoubtedly the relation between thought and its subject-matter must take on altogether new characters as the latter grows in its volume and complexity; but it is surely unreasonable absolutely to condemn metaphysics because its earlier historic forms attempted to operate in advance of material, when this in itself was inevitably of the scantiest. Here as elsewhere,

[1] *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 306.

[2] *Cf.* Professor Boyce Gibson's contrast between the scientific and the metaphysical standpoints in relation to ethics; he emphasises "the helplessness of philosophy when it adopts the scientific point of view from which to philosophise" (*A Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 4).

[3] I consider the true implications of its success in certain abstract subjects below, p. 24.

the child is father to the man; and although the great historical systems cannot but seem to us, surveying them from our later and higher standpoint, to be abstract and formal,[1] still they constitute a magnificent monument to the native power of pure thought; by which, however, I do not mean thought regarded as operating in absolute independence of and isolation from all content or data, but as analytically distinguishable from the content with which it coexists. Such content is one thing; the thought which first of all (a point far too often disregarded) accumulates this content, and afterwards universalises it, is quite another. It is therefore a profound error to lay too much stress on the presence or absence of content alone, and to infer that because its lack necessitates failure, therefore no further increase whatever will ensure success. This is plainly to neglect the other equally indispensable component in the final result—that mental or spiritual activity which, just in proving itself adequate to any content, thereby proclaims its transcendence of all. Napoleon at St. Helena, though powerless through lack of resources and opportunities, was none the less Napoleon.

Because (in other words) metaphysical method and its basal content are indispensable to each other—because they must always develop together and in mutual relation—it does not follow that they are therefore equivalent to each other in their functions and nature. Just as there exist in the natural world certain critical conditions of temperature, pressure, etc., which,

[1] In this respect it is somewhat surprising to find Bergson criticising previous thinkers so severely as he does (*Mind-Energy*, p. 3); surely they had other motives than self-esteem and the shirking of difficulty. This is the more curious as he has just before (p. 2) repeated, but without any acknowledgement, exactly what Hegel has said on the criticism of knowledge, in his *Logic* (Wallace), sec. 41.

when matter passes through them, result in a radical change of its state, so the continuous increase in the stress and volume of the elements of experience brings about a similarly fundamental alteration in its character. From the transitory phenomena themselves there emerge principles that are eternal and concrete in spite of their formality, and regulative rather than merely comprehensive. The summing up of thought has always in view a final judgement without appeal; and unless this is recognised as its ultimate aim, both its nature and its history, as revealed in earlier philosophic systems, are misread and misinterpreted. Paradoxical though it may appear, we apprehend the essential function of thought more truly in that sphere, restricted though it is, where it has already attained formal certainty, than in those wider provinces where the sheer volume of content itself forbids such success; just as an apparently negligible amount of matter, so long as it is pure, amply suffices the modern physicist who wishes to discover its essential properties.[1] The current dispute as to the relative priority of logic and mathematics may be left to find its own basis of compromise.[2] Much more suggestive here are the extent and direction of their recent marked advance. This simply means that while their "formality" remains as characteristic as before, it is becoming less sterile; more and more of reality, *i.e.*, is falling within its grasp —a development, further, whose limits cannot be foreseen, any more than the principles, *e.g.* of metageometry

[1] As in the separation of isotopes and the determination of atomic number in recent physical experiments.

[2] "It is the degree of complication in certain logical deductions which makes it convenient to shut some of them off from the rest of logic and call them mathematics. There is no fundamental difference whatever" (Dr. Wrinch, *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xxi. p. 195).

and of scientific relativity, were predictable by the great mathematicians of the past. It is curious that Bergson explicitly recognises this characteristic of modern thought, although he appears blind to its true implications. "Modern science," he admits, "is the offspring of mathematics, begotten on the day when algebra had acquired sufficient force and pliability to be *able to enfold reality* . . . science always tends to mathematics as to an ideal."[1] He interprets this, quite characteristically of course, in a sense wholly detrimental to science. But in view of his fundamental principle that the intellect can do nothing but distort and misrepresent reality, the question as to how in that case mathematics can ever come to "enfold reality"—and this in a degree increasing without conceivable limits—must suggest itself to every one except to those by whom exact science is condemned beforehand, as "a dog with a bad name."

The first fundamental conclusion then that I wish to maintain is that the "formality" of any basal principles is not, in itself and as such, necessarily a defect; it only becomes so when the correlative content is, for any reason, unduly limited in its scope; on the other hand, the more nearly content and form approach to identity, the more does the latter come to be the sole and indispensable basis of real certainty. This result, I have no doubt, presents at first sight some resemblance to Kant's position in his metaphysic of morality. But with regard to the relation between content and form, Kant's entire philosophy is directly opposed to the course of my argument; for the antithesis which he posited between these wholly precluded from the outset any possibility of their ever becoming identical;

[1] *Mind-Energy*, p. 70; italics mine.

and with more especial reference to the philosophic basis of ethics, his attitude is best described perhaps by the word "agnostic." A few brief quotations from Professor Watson's summary of his system will suffice, I think, to make this clear.

"Freedom and morality imply each other. (But) though speculative reason sets up the idea of freedom as possible, it cannot establish its reality. Hence while reason demands freedom, knowledge assures us only of the necessity of nature. Reason then would entirely transcend its proper limits, if it made any attempt to explain how pure reason can be practical, or how freedom is possible. Freedom is a pure idea, the objective reality of which can never be verified by being exhibited in concrete sensible form.[1] While therefore we cannot comprehend the unconditioned necessity of the moral imperative, we can comprehend how it comes about that it is incomprehensible. It is incomprehensible because the limits of our knowledge prevent us from directly knowing a free cause; on the other hand we are compelled to presuppose such a cause as the fundamental condition of morality."[2]

"The two realms of the sensible and the supersensible"—*i.e.* in principle "content" and "form"—"are in themselves absolutely distinct; for as Kant puts it in a bold metaphor, a gulf is fixed between them which for theoretical reason is absolutely impassable."[3] So that although "speculative philosophy" may reign it cannot govern; it may claim all the credit, but it is "practical philosophy" that does all the actual work; and although Kant certainly aimed at providing a

[1] I have endeavoured to establish the direct contrary of this in "The Genesis of Freedom," *Journal of Ethics*, vol. xxx. p. 232.

[2] *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, pp. 333-338.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 395.

metaphysical basis for both morality and knowledge, still he denied the possibility of that ultimate and substantial identity between content and form which appears to me to be the indispensable condition of success in any such attempt.[1] For in the end "Matter and form are shifting distinctions relative to the poin of view from which they are contemplated; and the same is true of the world and the mind, of which opposition the other is only another form. The task of the knower is laboriously to bring to light what is complete before him in his material." [2]

What "material," then, does the world offer to present-day knowledge? and what principles can be educed therefrom which shall serve as the fundamental basis for the ethical principle of obligation? The discussion of these questions constitutes the next stage of our enquiry.

[1] "It was only formally that the Kantian system established the principle that thought is self-determining. Into details of the manner and the extent of this self-determination of thought Kant never went" (Hegel, *Logic* (Wallace), sec. 60).

[2] Professor Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 300. *Cf.* with reference to Aristotle—"Alike in art and in nature there is the union of matter with constitutive form" (Professor S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, p. 116).

IV

PROLEGOMENA TO MORAL OBLIGATION

The course of ethical speculation, like all other sustained trains of thought, proceeds from given premises to regulative principles. This does not imply that the initial content is altogether formless, for (as has been said already) "no formless matter appears anywhere," and no level of experience, however low, is wholly amorphous; it merely means that such form as (perhaps uncritically) is accepted at the outset of any enquiry has exhibited its inherent inadequacy; its supplementation, again, will be best served by some still further increase in the volume of relevant material. What is the special standpoint then from which the consideration of the ultimate basis of moral obligation is best begun?

I have already pointed out that any "preliminary canons of limitation" of such an enquiry are altogether out of place; at the same time the field of investigation is so extensive that it is essential to outline as definitely as possible those principles which determine in the main the methods and object of our search.

The most important of these seems to me to be the fullest recognition of the reality of the element of obligation. Obligation may be termed the pivot of all morality—"the distinctive character of the moral

experience," whose neglect in the ethics of Aristotle forms, in Professor Webb's opinion, a vitally serious defect in that great system; "the obligatory character of morality is not grasped by him as the distinctive feature of moral experience." [1]

But its explanation, unless from some dogmatically religious point of view, too often means that it is explained away; and then ethics, in any true sense of the word, at once disappears. Problems would certainly remain in plenty; but any solution would be pragmatic rather than truly philosophical, and expediency would take the place of principle. At the present moment several tendencies combine, not only to weaken the actual sense of obligation, but still further to obscure its objective reality and validity. There is in the first place the natural reaction both from moral codes which had come to mistake rigidity for finality, and from the religious beliefs which had underlain them until advancing knowledge rendered them largely untenable. To the same result have contributed our easier conditions of life; when these were uniformly hard, and when the penalties for any neglect of duty, whether intentional or not, were much severer and more rapid in their action, its sternness appeared as a perfectly natural character, to be accepted without question as part of the very being of life itself; so that there operated a kind of moral selection. To-day, however, when stern duty calls us but rarely, it is natural that her voice should remain unrecognised.[2]

But not only on the practical side of life has the

[1] *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xx. p. 121.

[2] This assertion, together with much of what follows, may be questioned in view of the national spirit during the war. But I am treating of experience at its more usual level; undoubtedly this was heightened at the outbreak of the conflict; but the elevation has not been maintained unimpaired.

general consciousness of obligation been modified; in the sphere of thought also, taken as a whole, an analogous change of view has occurred. Here perhaps the main influence has been our deepening insight into the reign of natural law; this phrase of course has its own difficulties, but none the less its significance here is sufficiently definite. The conception of law, as such, may almost be said to mark the transition from barbarism to civilisation; and so long as its necessity was held to be derived from some source not alien to human nature—whether externally as in a theocracy or autocracy, or from within as in a democracy—it was unquestioningly accepted in principle in spite of occasional criticism and rebellion; while the general ignorance regarding natural phenomena prevented the development of any separate criterion. The absence of that factor so indispensable to the intellectual life of to-day—the idea of natural law—would appear to have had a marked influence on the course of Greek Philosophy. "Natural science," says Professor Taylor in his little volume on Plato, "in the sense of proved universal laws of physical process, had for him no being";[1] and similarly "Aristotle had no conception of a law of Nature."[2] The Greek standpoint, indeed, was in one sense the reverse of our own. "With the Greek the prevailing tendency was to look upon phenomena not as expressive of law but as expressive of purpose."[3] But when Nature came to be regarded —whether logically or not is here immaterial—as also ruled by law, its own unalterable and in a sense fatal necessity became—and again naturally even if illogically—repugnant to man's consciousness of his own

[1] *Plato*, p. 50. [2] T. Marshall, *Aristotle's Theory of Conduct*, p. 42.
[3] Professor Boyce Gibson, *A Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 52.

spiritual freedom. When this instinctive aversion at last found vocal expression, the consequences in religion and philosophy were manifold. Its influence on the conception of the nature of Deity may be disregarded; but in philosophy Necessity was either assigned a dual character, as being on the one hand natural and on the other moral, these two aspects then being variously related to each other; or it became wholly confined to the phenomenal world, whether that world was identical with nature or not; so that freedom, thus excluded from the sphere of phenomena, became either real but noumenal, or real but nominal; became, *i.e.* in spite of its unquestioned reality, either unattainable, or inexplicable; Kant may be taken as typical of the first position and Bergson of the second.

Inevitably then the concept of moral obligation, in any literal sense of the term, has become more or less confused, or even abandoned altogether; and if its retention is truly essential to sound ethics, then the fact that it must be so retained in the form of *moral* obligation constitutes the second of our main principles.

For the instinctive repudiation of obligation, merely as such, is thoroughly justified. Only a machine or a slave will submit to naked compulsion; and man feels himself to be neither. His freedom may prove to be after all illusory, and certainly its character is often misunderstood; feeling and intuition again, however deeply rooted they may be in human nature, are never in themselves sufficient grounds for truth; but even if man were but part of a mechanically determined Nature, still would he esteem the false appearance more highly than the reality. So that to characterise obligation as "moral" means that it must be brought, but without in the slightest degree impugning its imperativeness,

into complete harmony with a freedom which is at once spiritual and real.

This was the task which Kant—"the modern ethicist *par excellence*," as Professor Seth has called him [1]—set before himself; but there is a consensus of opinion that his attempt was unsuccessful. This is indeed the substance of the notably severe criticism directed by Hegel against the Kantian metaphysic; how extremely adverse this criticism was may be judged from the assertion that "the result arrived at by the Critical Philosophy bade man go and feed on mere husks and chaff," which is indeed a hard saying. "The principle of freedom," continues Hegel, "was emptied of all that it held, without his being able to infuse into it anything new." Thus Reason was "prevented from originating cognitive principles or moral laws." [2] Similarly, Kant's "categorical imperative" is certainly sufficiently stern and definite in appearance; but (again to quote Professor Seth) "the imperative of duty becomes an empty form without any ethical content. It is an unconditional command but it commands nothing in particular." [3] In the same manner freedom, in becoming noumenal, is severed from actuality; even if we take the view that noumena are the ideal limit of phenomena,[4] still the distinction between them is altogether too absolute. The final result of this abstractness of Kant's whole

[1] *Theism*, p. 22. [2] *Logic* (Wallace), secs. 28, 60.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 30. *Cf.* "The categorical imperative is too purely formal to enable us to proceed to any propositions relating to ends" (Mr. T. Whitaker, *Theory of Abstract Ethics*, p. 58).

[4] *Cf.* Professor Pringle-Pattison—"Self-consciousness . . . as the one noumenon to which all phenomena are referred" (*The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 318). Also Mr. Whitaker, *op. cit.* p. 12—"Kant's expressions about the thing in itself are not entirely consistent; the view to which he points most distinctly is that reality is a timeless system of ideas."

philosophical position is, from the special point of view of our present enquiry, almost disastrous; for there proves to be in the end no real basis for that imperativeness which is so distinctive a feature in Kantian ethics; or in other words, moral obligation is merely asserted without being substantiated. Professor Watson has already drawn attention to this serious hiatus in Kant's morality. "No proof has been given," he says, "that the moral law is universally obligatory. There is here a sort of circle from which it is impossible to escape. We cannot be subject to moral law unless we are free, and we cannot conceive of ourselves as free unless we are under moral law." [1] In this connection also then it would seem that Kant's work must be done over again.

In the third place the Kantian categorical imperative implies that the factor of desire, as such, can at no stage constitute the *final* criterion; neither in itself, nor in its object taken merely as desired. But we shall find, I believe, that this cannot imply that desire and its implications provide (as Kant argued) no standard of any kind. For Kant, "duty excludes not only all direct violations of morality, but all acts the motive of which is inclination, even when these are not in themselves opposed to duty." [2] On the contrary, desire and the content on which it is directed will form one definite starting-point for our enquiry, although they certainly never act as infallible guides. This is indeed plainly implied by the character of obligation itself as being completely independent of desire, though this does not mean that the two are ever unrelated.

Finally, a more precise definition of what is meant by a "philosophic" or "metaphysical basis" is required

[1] *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, p. 333. [2] *Ibid.* p. 312.

than has been given hitherto. Vaguely extensive as are its usual meanings, they may all be summed up, I think, as implying some form of rational expression of *ultimate* principles or truths; its differentiæ, *i.e.*, are rationality and finality. It may be objected that these attributes are essentially incompatible; that a discursive reason, since it can never complete itself, can never attain finality; and if that were really true then metaphysics would be compelled to follow reason just so far as it could go and there halt.

But here we touch upon one of the most serious, as also one of the commonest, misconceptions of popular thought. For the term "rationality" is far too often interpreted in much too narrow a sense; and if this sense is adhered to, then the rejection of all metaphysics at once follows; and the same thing may be said with reference to "finality" or "ultimacy." But eminent writers on ethics have also advanced a somewhat similar view. Thus we find Mr. Whitaker affirming that "we mean by metaphysics knowledge of an 'intelligible' reality in so far as intelligible, and not as having value. Perfection—value—is not given in any metaphysical concept." [1] But any such exclusion of value is surely arbitrary. Our "rational expression of ultimate truths"—the meaning just assigned to metaphysics—must, in short, seek to be all-comprehensive, must attempt to include every aspect of both human nature and the world which environs it; and this means, in the end, that even our "judgements of value" may exhibit what Dr. Bosanquet has called a "substantially *a priori* character." [2]

[1] *Theory of Abstract Ethics*, p. 68. This position appears to be shared by Dr. G. E. Moore.

[2] *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 95.

We are naturally inclined, when we find Hegel asserting that "man is a thinking being and a born metaphysician," to suspect that this can be nothing more than the philosopher's version of the old cry "nothing like leather"; and yet very little reflection, and very little experience of life, suffice to show that at bottom it is true that "the real question is not whether we shall apply metaphysics, but whether our metaphysics are of the right kind." [1] The final proof of the inadequacy of one system of metaphysics—and every existing system without exception is undeniably defective in some respects—can be furnished only by an alternative system. Its insufficiency may perhaps be felt to be indubitable. But feeling (together with intuition) is always in such a case something merely personal and individual; and it must then be content to remain a powerful but absolutely silent influence, or it must seek to express itself in more or less definite terms, and then it also develops—inevitably—its own metaphysic. This holds true of religion also, in so far at least as religion is identical with emotion or intuition or ecstasy. "In the long run," argues Professor Pringle-Pattison, "reason claims the whole man. . . . He is continually being asked to exercise his reason upon parts of the revelation, even by those who most strenuously maintain the severance of the two spheres." [2] To urge again that the spirit of man is so limited that it can never fathom the Idea of the universe is a two-edged argument which threatens equally the religious consciousness. Reason in short must be allowed to work out its own salvation; or if damnation, even then still its own.

But the phrase "Idea of the universe" again must

[1] *Logic* (Wallace), sec. 98. [2] *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 217.

not be misunderstood. The word "Idea" signifies neither a vague and indefinite impression or understanding, as in ordinary usage, nor (philosophically) a merely subjective mental or thought content of any kind, whether this content is located within the individual or the general mind, or within some kind of experience in which it first originates, thence to be somehow outwardly projected and erected into a world.[1] The critics of philosophical Idealism frequently ascribe it to some such postulate as this, and believe that in disproving it they are refuting Idealism; but their attacks are directed altogether to the wrong quarter, and are indeed based upon a radical misrepresentation of this system of thought.

Idealism, carrying out the original meaning of the Greek root-word, insists not on the process of thought, much less on mere subjectivity, but rather on objective form—system—organisation; on universal connection and relevance, and on unity in diversity. All these various terms, together with others similar to them, share a fundamental common meaning which is by no means new, but which still seems very greatly in need of emphasis. Thus, in Professor Pringle-Pattison's words, "The Idea is the purpose or *raison d'être*, or simply the 'meaning,' of the universe."[2] Similarly again, Professor Reyburn—"Idealism postulates that Reality is a single system, so that it is possible to pass from any point in it to the standpoint of the whole. . . . Philosophy ought to be cosmocentric."[3]

[1] Still less is there any direct connection with "ideal," in its moral or æsthetic sense of something to be realised or something unattainable. This predominant modern meaning of "ideal," though perfectly justified as a historical development, is unfortunately extremely confusing in connection with philosophic Idealism.

[2] *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 266.

[3] *Mind*, October 1913. "There is only one world, one reality" (Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 293).

This by no means implies, however, that Idealism assumes this principle dogmatically and without any basis; on the contrary it finds it increasingly confirmed by every advance in human experience—in art and science and religion.

"Every work both of nature and of art," Bishop Butler tells us, "is a system." [1] The whole is present and active within everything — is "immanent," if we desire a technical term; conversely everything, at bottom and in its full nature, implies the Whole, and can never be truly comprehended except as it takes its place and fulfils its function within the Whole. Tennyson's well-known

Flower in the crannied wall

expresses perfectly the essential principle of Idealism.

And although Reality therefore is not thought (Hegel, *e.g.*, held Reality to be Spirit), still thought is (in the above sense) ideal; but this is not because it contains "ideas," either psychologically or logically, nor again because Reality is its product or its construction (though there is a subordinate sense in which this is true); [2] but rather because thought, like all the higher categories of Being, is essentially organised, systematic, unified in spite of (or better, in virtue of) its infinite diversity. Reality is not thought, nor is thought all that there is of Reality; but the nature of thought is one with the nature of Reality. Reality is immanent in thought, and therefore thought is capable (in principle)

[1] Preface to *Sermons*, sec. 10.

[2] "What is the fundamental feature of all reason, of all ideal forms?" asks Professor Wallace. "They rise from us, seem to be our offspring, perhaps our product, and yet turn round and lord it over us. Conscience; fashion; love. We act purposely, and it seemed free for us to do or to abstain, yet the deed is an irrevocable master" (*Lectures*, p. 104).

of apprehending Reality. Many thinkers indeed would go further than this; they would regard thought as that which brings us closest to Reality, as the most adequate factor in the whole of man's being which enables him to comprehend and grasp the Universe.[1]

Wherever indeed there is a theology there is a metaphysic; it may be sound or unsound, but it is still a metaphysic if only in intention rather than in actual attainment. Nor is it saved from this by basing itself on divine revelation; for as soon as this seeks, in face of criticism and opposition, to universalise itself, it must justify itself to the reason of its day and generation, or perish. The only real distinction between metaphysics and theology is that they begin their advance from opposite poles; one begins with the world, the other with God; or if these are held to be identical, then their respective aspects differ. Each has a "given," but a different "given"; and to hold that it is impossible to trace the path from the world to God is surely dangerous doctrine.

That theology, in dealing with its essential principles, is only one special form of metaphysics, is of course a position of long standing; in the age of Scholasticism it was taken for granted without any question. The great German Idealist Fichte, as Professor Pringle-Pattison has already pointed out, maintained that even "religion, whatever form it may have assumed, has been essentially metaphysic";[2] which means, approaching their identity from the

[1] "It is difficult to see how (Prichard) can maintain that all Idealism must be subjective. Most of what is called Idealism certainly is; but can either Plato or Hegel be charged with that heresy? Those who say that all reality is experience are probably guilty of it; but are those who maintain that all reality is intelligible equally guilty?" (Professor Mackenzie, *Mind*, vol. xx. p. 504).

[2] *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 269.

opposite point of view, that "philosophy is the *credo* as *intelligo*. In the long run a divided truth, a truth in theology indifferent to a truth in science, is intolerable to humanity."[1]

Nor does such an emphasis on the rational or intellectual aspects of religious belief involve the neglect or subordination of its emotional and volitional elements. It remains as true as before that the "strength of faith is the very life of religion. But when religion seeks to give an intelligent expression of her faith, she is apt to base her creed on signs and miracles. She uses the language of sense and analogy; she presents the spiritual under the guise of the natural";[2] and from these fatal errors of apologetic method religion can be saved only by assimilating those highest oblations of Reason, which indeed her noblest defenders in past ages have never disdained. Undoubtedly their definite conclusions, or perhaps it would be truer to say the modes in which these were expressed, were too often erroneous or inadequate. But this means not that their method in itself was mistaken, but merely that the material knowledge at their disposal was far too scanty and disconnected for the great purpose they had in view.

I think therefore that no valid objections can be raised against metaphysical procedure as such, whatever may be thought about its results; while if any more positive justification be sought, it may be found in the spirit of our day; in the expansion of science, for example, whose recent discoveries include the greatest of all — that of its own limitations; in the historic evidence of the insufficiency of mere dogma;

[1] Professor W. Wallace, *Lectures on Natural Theology*, pp. 84, 563.
[2] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 253, slightly abridged.

and in that growing interest in purely ethical speculation, where the search for a metaphysical basis denotes the attempt to place moral principles on as firm and broad a foundation as reason permits us to do; an attempt undertaken in the belief that "the things which are most important in man's experience are also the things which are most certain to his thought. This is inevitable, because importance and reality are sides of the same characteristic." [1]

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality*, Preface, p. v.

V

THE STARTING-POINT OF ENQUIRY—THE WORLD OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE

The starting-point then for metaphysics—its "given," to employ an often-used term—is the world as known or experienced; and this qualification—as known or experienced—raises in the first place a distinction which may perhaps appear too fine, but which is nevertheless of fundamental philosophic importance. The confusion which has attended the discussion of the word "experience" in modern philosophy is perhaps unparalleled; the interest and the controversy aroused by Mr. Bradley's consideration of the term, in his monumental *Appearance and Reality*, constitute (I think) ample evidence of this; and to pursue the problem in any detail would be but to make confusion worse confounded. It must be sufficient to say that if we hold that knowledge or metaphysics "begins in experience," it is very necessary to guard ourselves from being committed, in advance, to what proves to be in its essentials sheer subjectivism. Professor Mackenzie, as we have seen already, believes that "those who say that all reality is experience are probably guilty" of this;[1] and certainly much modern Idealism appears too deeply tinged, to say

[1] *Cf.* p. 38, n. 1.

the least, with subjectivist implications. But so to interpret the Idealism of Plato and of Hegel is to eviscerate it; for Idealism, as these thinkers conceived it, was through and through objectivist, or it was nothing. "Idealism," continues Professor Wallace, "does not idealise (so as to falsify). It means complete reality; absolute, systematic, unconditioned reality . . . completing itself in art, religion and philosophy. Still less is it an idealism which turns reality and historic fact into *mere* ideas. Such an organism which is life, thinking, will, is what Hegel calls the Idea; an organism which is completely organic, with no mere matter; that Idea is the foundation of his Idealism";[1] an interpretation which is thoroughly justified by Hegel's own more technical expression of his thought. "The object of Philosophy," we find, "is the Idea . . . actually existing. The object is an actuality. Everything actual, in so far as it is true, is the Idea; a thing distinct from abstract analytic determinations or from the merely sensible conceptions which usually appropriate the name of ideas."[2] It is surely impossible to repudiate subjectivism more distinctly and definitely than Hegel has done here; and it is difficult to conceive any other source for the misrepresentations of Hegelianism, to which Lord Haldane has drawn attention,[3] than sheer ignorance of his own clear presentation of his philosophy. "To say that Reason is in the world is equivalent in its import to the phrase Objective Thought . . . that objectivity which is proper to the Idea."[4]

[1] *Prolegomena*, pp. 145, 154.

[2] *Logic* (Wallace), secs. 6, 45, 213. "Sensible" here means pertaining to sense experience.

[3] *Cf.* Chap. I. p. 5 *ante*.

[4] *Logic*, secs. 24, 60.

It is true, of course, that even this fundamental objectivity finally becomes transcended as within the whole of Reality; but it is not so transcended in order to make room for any form of Subjectivity. Rather are both of these categories transcended together—the one along with, and equally with, the other. "Just as religion and worship consist in overcoming the antithesis of subjectivity and objectivity, so science and philosophy have no other task than to overcome this antithesis by the medium of thought. The implicit unity of subjective and objective is realised, and is the Idea"; [1] and finally, Hegel himself traces his objective Idealism back to Aristotle and Plato.[2]

But another difficulty suggests itself—that the idea of a "*world* as known" is altogether too advanced and complex to form a true beginning or starting-point, and should rather form the conclusion of any philosophical analysis. But to admit the truth of this contention is at the same time to deprive it of all its force, for two reasons; first because knowledge is always and at every stage knowledge of reality as systematised into *some* kind of a whole; and secondly because *every* advance in knowledge—not only its latest phases—implies the continuous and relevant transformation or reorganisation of this primary whole. Knowledge (or experience), *i.e.*, does not begin with a void or chaos, and then evoke from this a universe; rather it *begins* with a world, simple it may be in its character and crude in its material, but none the less a more or less rounded-off totality; the "world" of a child, *e.g.*, or even of the higher animals; and within this primitive whole it then discovers, in accord with its own native activity, characters and principles which supplement

[1] *Logic*, secs. 194, 212. [2] *Ibid.* secs. 36, 142, 236.

and transcend its original limitations. Knowledge and world, in short, develop *pari passu* in inseparable union. "All logical process," as Dr. Bosanquet has expressed this, "is the reshaping of a world of content." [1]

This is then the *general* methodological principle of metaphysics. But in so far as ethics bases itself upon metaphysics, it must assume a position at once more limited and more advanced than this. Its "given" must then become, not the world as known merely, but the world as understood in the light of our *fullest* knowledge; the *total* environment which the mind is capable of apprehending, and in relation to which our activities must be directed. Exactly what such a comprehensive world includes is of course a subject for argument, and I shall endeavour to indicate the general nature of its content a little later on. But it is from this extended basis, not from the simple or limited content with which all knowledge as such begins, that ethics derives (as I remarked at the outset) its all-comprehensive range and appeal. For conduct, regarded in its aspect as action, is always reaction; further, as moral action it is essentially voluntary; and the will, again, is inseparable from the whole of the personality, where personality is understood in its widest significance, not only as individual and unitary in any limited sense, but as determined by and reflecting the entire natural and social organisation in which it finds its own place; and "knowledge" may then be defined as the articulate expression of the characters

[1] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 332. *Cf.* also p. 55:—"The ultimate tendency of thought is not to generalise, but to constitute a world." Similarly, "Knowledge starts from the complex situation in which the human race finds itself at the dawn of self-consciousness" (Professor Kemp Smith, *Commentary to Kant's Critique*, p. xxxviii). *Cf.* also Wallace, *Prolegomena*, chap. xvii.

of this organisation so far as it is communicable. For Art also is expressive, but always directly to the individual; and when beyond this direct personal appeal it is in any way interpreted, then Æsthetics arises as a purely theoretic development which constitutes a part of knowledge, or (it may easily be) even of metaphysics itself.

But while the reality of this connection between conduct and knowledge is obvious, its true character is not so clear. Both Socrates and Plato based their philosophy of action upon it, the former pragmatically and Plato in a deeper and more formally theoretic spirit. Each of these thinkers thus emphasised an aspect which is fundamental; for when the two are combined we obtain once again the principle, already insisted upon, of the underlying identity of form and content. In saying then that knowledge is intimately connected with conduct, we must mean the fullest concrete content of knowledge, which is again, as I have already argued, in principle one with its form.

But in falling back in this manner on "the full concrete content of knowledge," are we not in effect rendering progress, not to say success, in the enquiry impossible? Is not the volume of modern knowledge so vast that any attempt to summarise it and to constitute it as the basis of ethics must be from the outset hopeless? On this point the history of Greek speculation is again suggestive. For it was a somewhat analogous difficulty—that is of perceiving any connection between knowledge and principles of conduct —which determined the pragmatic method of Socrates; for him the only learning that had any value was such as bore directly upon virtue; and in the light of the sum of the knowledge of his day his application of his

method was certainly justified. Pragmatism indeed might be defined as the practical philosophy of agnosticism, or at least of limited knowledge; the wisdom of the dim-eyed in the kingdom of the blind. And in spite of the far more comprehensive standpoint and deeper insight of Plato, he also was handicapped by the scantiness of acquired knowledge; while Aristotle's departure from Platonic Idealism, in spite of his interest in natural science, so narrowed his outlook and lowered his standard that his ethics has but little universality. "He does not write a world-ethics," asserts Professor Marshall. "Its scope is limited to the consideration of conduct proper for an Hellenic City-state."[1] Dean Rashdall's comment is still severer. "Aristotle represents in some respects one of the lowest among highly civilised moralities. His is the least modern, universalistic, humane—the most aristocratic, particularistic, and intellectualistic. It is the morality of the little slave-holding aristocratic class in the City-state."[2]

Modern philosophy, however, is embarrassed not by the dearth of our knowledge but by its very plenitude; its problem is not to discover truth but to select it; and here its success depends on the possibility of finding some principle of unification, some basal criterion of the value and significance of all that is known. And among the innumerable points of departure which metaphysical ethics finds in our total knowledge of the world the most fruitful is the conception of the world as an evolving or developing organised system. It is somewhat in this sense that Dr. McTaggart interprets

[1] *Aristotle's Theory of Conduct*, p. 21. *Cf.* Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, p. 64. Professor Webb, *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xx. p. 120.

[2] *Conscience and Christ*, p. 241.

the Hegelian Idea. "The Universe is differentiated. It consists of an organic system of Individuals";[1] and by "organic" is implied dynamic, not merely static. Science, since Hegel's day, has read a much fuller meaning into "dynamic"; for us this is not merely energy, movement, activity; it is a *directed* movement —but not necessarily directed only from without—an *evolving* or developing activity. Of these two terms development appears to be preferable to evolution, because it carries with it fewer dubious presuppositions. Evolution has unfortunately come to lend itself too easily to some such representation as Bergson's; "as if a vague and formless being had sought to realise himself";[2] or it denotes progress from simple to complex, from indefinite to definite. "Vague and formless being" is only the shallowest of metaphors; but the terms simplicity and indefiniteness are little more. For science discovers, and discovers increasingly, that complexity—in other words "a world"—exists everywhere and always, even in the electronic atoms of the hypothetic primitive nebula. But as the universal development proceeds its manifold phases alter; so that it is best conceived not merely as an *increase* in the complexity of the developing system, but rather as a continuous *transformation of the modes* of that complexity.[3] Thus it presents itself, *e.g.*, in the living organism and in the advancing society; alike, at the beginning and at the end of the process—in the germ as in the adult, in the tribe as in the nation—there is

[1] *Commentary on Hegel's Logic*, sec. 292.

[2] *Creative Evolution*, p. 281.

[3] Associated with this are changes in the type of determination; *cf.* Chap. IX. "The world grows not by addition but by internal distribution" (Professor Alexander, *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xviii. p. 415). *Cf.* also *The Monist*, vol. xxxi. p. 367.

organised complexity of an extremely high and intricate order. How else, indeed, could any development ever occur? Even if we exclude all self-development, all internal determination, still the external stimulus must find, within, something in which it can arouse an adequate response; there must be at least "potentiality," if we may adopt a term usually looked upon with much undeserved suspicion; but potentiality really means nothing more than a phase of complex organisation which, unexhausted in its energy and still retaining therefore some dynamic character, can further, once given the appropriate conditions, enter into relations with its environing complexes in such a way as to constitute new systems. "Potentialities are also actualities, which protest their own incompleteness, and crave imperiously for what they lack. . . . All progress is an incessant revision of a first step: a repeated and unending self-correction. It is only a partially-true symbol of human advance to speak of it as a line. The savage is still present; the Pullman car retains the rudiments of the primitive wain. For progress is an organic, and not merely a mechanical or chemical change. Nothing is quite lost, but only changed, retained in a richer shape and a fuller reality."[1] How far then can we trace the logical implications of such an "organic" interpretation of progress? and to what degree do they provide a basis for a theory of moral obligation?

[1] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, pp. 173, 174, 261; abridged.

VI

THE DIRECTION OF WORLD DEVELOPMENT

"A RICHER shape, a fuller reality"—the phrase raises a still profounder problem. How far is this true? To what extent is it anything more than the expression of an aspiration, the utterance of a firm faith, "the substance of things hoped for"? Admitting organisation, development, direction, there yet remains a familiar but still more fundamental question: Is it possible definitely to determine the general principles of this direction? Does it follow one path or many? and if the latter, are they divergent or convergent? Are all the endlessly diverse phases of evolution unified towards one end? Again, is development (in principle) limited or unlimited? Can we foresee any definite bounds to its possibilities? And finally, is the end higher than the beginning?[1]

The various answers that have already been given to these questions have formed the substance of many philosophies. It is interesting to notice, for example, that the view-point of Greek philosophy—despite its

[1] "Beginning" and "End" are perhaps rather inadequate terms here, and raise all the difficulties associated with time and development. Still, subject to future qualification, they present a definite aspect of the problem. *Cf.* Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 170.

insistence on the element of purpose in the structure of reality—appears to lack the sense of any supreme and final consummation of universal development. "In Greek authors of classical times," affirms Professor Butcher, "there is no trace of the thought that the human race is advancing towards a divinely appointed goal. . . . Plato did not share Aristotle's disbelief in continuous progress; none the less he is wellnigh hopeless for the mass of mankind."[1] But at the present moment opinion seems to be more evenly divided than it has usually been during the long course of controversy. For there is, commonly, a definite preponderance in one direction or the other; a well-marked majority and minority which in due time come to displace each other. To-day, however, the balance appears to be curiously even; science—speaking of course broadly and admitting many weighty exceptions—seems to be favourable to a world-development that is not only really continuous but which leads to ever higher ends; while ethicists, even when they occupy a definitely religious point of view, are rather hesitant or even frankly despairing. They seem to believe that

> The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
> And as things have been, they remain;

a situation which is frequently relieved by expressions of a stoic fortitude which spring, however, from emotion rather than from pure reason;[2] a mood which has been perfectly expressed by the author of the previous quotation—A. H. Clough:

[1] *Aspects of Greek Genius*, pp. 162, 164.

[2] *E.g.* Mr. Bertrand Russell's well-known essay—"A Free Man's Worship" (*Mysticism and Logic*, p. 46); and Dean Inge's well-known views.

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so!
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

It is possible that this is but the inevitable consequence of an unvarying relation between philosophic speculation and acquired knowledge; and that modern ethics, being still under the influence of the somewhat materialistic science of the last few decades, has to-day fallen behind in the spirit of its own deliverances. Recent science itself certainly adopts a much more optimistic tone. The possible early utilisation of intra-atomic energy, say some physicists, will revolutionise the physical and economic basis of civilisation.[1] Revolutions, however, are slightly at a discount at present; and the more concrete sciences, attuned to the lingering currents of animate nature, give powerful support to a more moderate though equally weighty opinion. It will perhaps be sufficient to cite here an exponent of admitted ability and judgement at some little length.

"As we look back," says Professor J. A. Thomson, "we see that finer and finer actors have appeared, and the situations have become more intricate. Is there not meaning in the indubitably progressive evolution of the nervous system, the elaboration of behaviour, the emancipation of the psyche? There has been a growing appreciation and mastery of the world. There seems good reason for regarding evolution as essentially integrative. It is difficult to shut out the impression

[1] Notably Professor Soddy in *Science and Life*. The tide appears to be turning in philosophy also. *Cf.* Sir Henry Jones on evolution and religion in his Gifford Lectures, *A Faith that Enquires*, pp. 98, 163.

that Nature is Nature for a purpose. We must take account of the main trend in evolution, making for the dominance of mentality and the establishment of personality. If we err in using the word Purpose, we err less grievously than if we used no word at all. Evolution is essentially integrative. Who shall impiously prescribe its limits? In regard to a race and an external heritage that may go on evolving for millions of years to come it is premature to speak of final stage." [1]

It would be easily possible to carry quotation here to much greater length; but it will be sufficient to sum up Professor Thomson's position in the apt phrase of Dr. James Ward: "Rags and Bones is not the cry of science; what it finds everywhere, save *per accidens*, is form, unity, function and organisation." [2] And the obvious contrast between Professor Thomson's general view and that of Huxley (to whom he makes frequent reference) is a striking and highly significant indication of the recent transformation in the scientific outlook. "Organic evolution is most certainly progressive. Life has been in the main creeping upwards. Palæontologists have very strong convictions as to the reality of progressive variation along a definite line, and the absence of arrows shot at a venture." [3] "Life as a whole has moved in a progressive direction. Such changes have occurred in several separate evolutionary lines." [4]

I think then that it may be accepted, without our being committed to assumptions that are entirely baseless, that world-development is characterised through-

[1] *The System of Animate Nature*, pp. 567, 598, 640-643.
[2] *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xx. p. 20.
[3] *Animate Nature*, pp. 375, 427.
[4] Dr. J. S. Huxley, *Discovery*, vol. i. p. 378.

out by a continuous advance; but before considering the further question of the criterion of this progress, I should like to enquire whether we can in any degree go beyond the bare fact of its reality; and further whether any limits to its extent can be ascertained.

It is dangerous to press too hastily Hegel's familiar and apparently—but only apparently, for, here as elsewhere, Hegel means exactly what he says—paradoxical principle that "What is reasonable is actual." "There is a double edge," Professor Wallace has warned us, "to the proposition."[1] It may delude us into a worthless optimism—into the belief that whatever is, is right, simply *as* it is; so that we thoughtlessly omit the penultimate line of Pippa's song:

> God's in His heaven—
> All's right with the world!

Even should we escape that snare, there still faces us the problem—what then is the Real?

To identify it, just as we perceive it and without further parley, with the rational is to confuse reality with appearance. Therefore the mere fact that progressive development still occurs, and has occurred (further) throughout the long courses of physical, vital and mental evolution, no matter how unmistakable it is nor how long continued it may have been, does not in itself suffice to establish its "Truth" (in the Hegelian sense) as an *essential* feature of reality, nor, again, the purely *logical* necessity for its continuance.

The term "logical necessity," however, must here be understood not in any shallow and abstract sense, but rather as sharing in and therefore as reflecting the ultimate necessity of Reality itself. For "logical

[1] *Logic*, sec. 6 and p. xxvi.

exactitude in the full and true sense is not a deadening but a vitalising quality." "The nature of things must be respected by logic."[1] "The aim of philosophy," further, "is to ascertain the necessity of things. All true thinking is a thinking of necessity";[2] and again, the necessity of *things*, of *Reality*, as in accord with the fundamental objectivity of Hegel's philosophy. Reality, too, must be regarded as organised, as a system, as a universe of individuals interrelated and corelevant. On this principle the standpoints of modern science and of idealistic philosophy coincide. For "philosophy sees a growth, a revealing or unfolding, which issues in an organism or system, constructing itself more and more completely by a force of its own. This system is called the Idea, of which the highest law is development";[3] the Idea, it may be worth while repeating, being the fullest and all-inclusive whole of Reality, not a mere figment of subjective thought or consciousness. And this philosophic concept of system has proved to be a well-founded anticipation of one of the fundamental principles of modern science. Thus Dr. A. N. Whitehead, approaching the field of his investigations as a mathematician and physicist, repeats the already quoted dictum of Bishop Butler; only, as is to be expected, he is able to trace the operation of his principle in spheres of which the Bishop could not conceive. "Nature is a system," he insists; "the

[1] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 59. Mr. Bradley, *Logic*, p. 137. *Cf.* my previous reference to "flawless logic in music," p. 5.

[2] Hegel, *Smaller Logic*, sec. 119.

[3] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 53. The word "system" may be considered too artificial and mechanical. I am glad to find it has been used extensively by Sir Henry Jones in *A Faith that Enquires*—"knowledge is a system of systems. It is complex throughout. It is systems that agree or disagree in our rational experience. The simplest unit is already a system. Every fact known is a system" (p. 61). *Cf.* also pp. 79, 81, and Professor Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, pp. 219, 220.

conception which most fully expresses the character of nature is that of each event as modified by the ingression of each electron into nature." [1] And similarly in the realm of life—" this is one of the fundamental biological concepts—the correlation of organisms in the web of life. There is no insulation. We get a glimpse of a vast self-regulating organisation. The correlation becomes in turn a directive factor." [2] But this invaluable concept of interrelated system extends far beyond physics and biology, and applies indeed universally. All law, in so far as it conforms to the scientific type, is itself based on universal connection in real existence. " Laws are not entirely independent of each other, each assumes in some measure the truth of the others; all science is intimately cross-connected by innumerable ties, real though slight." [3] Certainly the complete formulation of scientific law is an ideal which will never be fully realised, and as it approaches its fuller completion its internal character itself changes, so that it becomes truly organic instead of mechanical and superficial; " causes and effects rolled round into each other, instead of remaining calmly fixed." [4] Still law and reality stand or fall together; and the growth of knowledge is sporadic only to a casual view. For knowledge ultimately implies, if it is to be anything more than haphazard conjecture about disconnected facts, the systematic unity of reality, within which no individual is complete except as in relation to all others, nor yet these others without itself; even if it be, as for Dr. Whitehead, only a single electron; its functions

[1] *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 146, 160.
[2] Professor Thomson, *op. cit.* pp. 58, 59.
[3] Dr. Norman Campbell, *Physics, The Elements*, p. 50.
[4] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 168.

and activity determined by, and again contributing to, the complete nature of the whole.

In so far again as this ultimate unity is lost sight of, scientific law loses a great part of its value; for it then becomes involved in that confusion which attends the logical extension of the principle of cause and effect, and which was clearly exhibited throughout the long and often futile controversies as to the exact purport of this indispensable category. "The cause, philosophically speaking," observes one of the protagonists in the Homeric contest, "is the sum-total of the conditions positive and negative taken together"; he has also discussed the difficulties arising from the "intermixture of effects and plurality of causes," [1] all of which may be summed up in the infinite retrogression which is the utmost that "cause and effect," taken (from the philosophical standpoint) purely as such, ever yield. This is equally true in its strictly scientific aspects. "The use of a causal relation in a law," continues Dr. Campbell, "is a confession of incomplete knowledge"; [2] and these vitally serious defects can be avoided only by apprehending "that idea of the whole or totality of being, in the light of which only can all individual things and thoughts be understood. Each object is what it is only in virtue of its relations to other objects, and ultimately to the whole system of being." [3]

There is therefore within the large volume of modern scientific knowledge weighty, even if not indisputable, evidence for the conclusion that "the whole system of being" does as an actual fact exhibit

[1] Mill, *System of Logic*, bk. iii. chaps. 5, 10. *Cf.* Spencer, *First Principles*, xx. *et seq.*

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 67.

[3] J. Caird, *Spinoza*, p. 135.

progressive development. But it appears to me that the principle of its systematic unity—a principle common, as I have attempted to prove, to both science and philosophy—takes us further even than this, and carries us beyond the mere *actuality* of its occurrence to its rational *necessity*. For the full elucidation of the meaning of "systematic unity" appears to me to yield sufficient proof that this principle implies (*a*) that every existing complex system has attained its actual concrete structure as the result of all previous change; and (*b*) that while it retains this structure unaltered, the maintenance of such a state of stable equilibrium is responsive to the totality of the environing conditions. Therefore (*c*) when any change to which the system is sensitive occurs in the environment, since each system is (*ex hypothesi*) complex, its various parts must respond differentially to the external stimulus. But this differentiated internal reaction really means that there arise, within the original system, new subordinate systems which did not exist, as such new systems, before; and this results, necessarily, in an uninterrupted advance in systematisation—in continuously increased specialisation and heterogeneity.

This advance, still further, must be continuous without any assignable limits, for three reasons: (*a*) the stimuli in each instance are not isolated, but many and varied, and each contributes to the final compound result; (*b*) as the new systems arise within the parent system, every further change within this itself as a whole must be to some degree a change outside each of these, and must induce within them again still further complexity *ad infinitum*; finally (*c*) every system affects reactively its own environment; so that what are effects within it become in turn causes outside it;

and thus the induced higher internal complexity is reflected outwards again, and so brings about correlative responsive advances in the surrounding systems.

But conclusions so apparently speculative and so far-reaching cannot be advanced apart from their logical grounds, which form the subject of the next chapter.

NOTE.—Since the above was written, weighty additional evidence in support of its general principle has been furnished by an article by Professor Eddington in *Nature*, vol. 111, p. 18. I extract the following passage:—"We have come to recognise that the stellar system is one great organisation, and that the stars which are shining now are more or less coeval with one another. . . . We now believe that it was one process of evolution sweeping across the primordial matter which caused it to form itself into stars, and these original stars are the actual stars which we see shining now."

VII

THE CONSERVATION OF VALUE IN THE UNIVERSE: I.

"It is the paradox of humanity," Dr. Bosanquet has reminded us, "that the best qualities of man himself, and the forms of experience in which he is most perfect, are not at first sight very widely distributed."[1] The more complex an organisation, the more restricted and the more transient it appears to be. The higher is also the rarer. Simple physical forces range over solar and sidereal spaces; but the living cell is microscopic. Barbarism seems to be immortal, while knowledge and art perish. And we cannot help feeling that this is an unnecessary paradox; we secretly cherish the conviction that had we ourselves its ordering, the universe would be far more rational. This indeed was in ancient times the almost openly expressed belief of humanity; the thoughtful Greek felt himself to be "the measure of all things," and the devout Hebrew "a little lower than the angels." In Plato's partially allegorical, yet also partially philosophic, "scheme of creation man ranks first among the inferior classes of beings; next in order to the θεοὶ θεῶν, and all the other species are arranged in a descending scale below him";[2]

[1] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 316.

[2] R. K. Gaye, *The Platonic Conception of Immortality*, p. 164.

and it is difficult to accept with perfect equanimity the Copernican revolution in knowledge and in thought which appears at first sight to have given man his final and proper status as the transient offspring of the eternal galaxies.

> Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
> To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
> Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
> Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

For where philosophy is dubious, science—in spite of that deepening impression of the reality of continuous progress which was illustrated in the preceding chapter—is often sufficiently definite, and with an adverse verdict in the form of the widely held opinion that all change and development must ultimately cease, owing to the final "degradation" of universal energy into uniformly distributed—and therefore valueless—heat.

But if, on the other hand, we press to its logical conclusion the principle of the systematically unified nature of all Reality—a principle which, as the last chapter also evidenced, is fundamental for modern science—we then appear to reach the conclusion that the processes of universal change must result in the development of modes of organisation which become continuously higher and higher, without any assignable limits; so that parallel to the scientific truth of the Conservation of Energy must be posited its philosophical counterpart—the Conservation of Values.[1] For so far as the activity of thought in itself is concerned, it is coming to be more and more recognised that "the scope of the mind as an organising principle in the world has no limit known to us."[2]

[1] The nature and the ultimate criterion of Value are considered in a later chapter.

[2] Professor Hobhouse, *The Rational Good*, p. 113.

The complete discussion of so controversial a problem, however, plainly involves points of purely scientific interest whose introduction would scarcely be justified here. I shall merely summarise their results by saying that it appears possible to show that those very physical phenomena which have hitherto been taken to prove the tendency to "universal physical death" are really, when properly envisaged and interpreted, the indispensable conditions apart from which the process of evolution, as science traces it in its full details, could never have occurred. The protracted fall in temperature, for example, whose further continuance is regarded as threatening the cessation of all development, is the requisite condition for the advance in the stable complexity of all chemical compounds; and this loss of heat, further, is one dominant factor in that change from an irregular to a symmetrical form which is an invariable characteristic of the evolution of planetary systems in general. Nor is it at all certain that the final level of temperature to be attained will be fatal to all vital and conscious processes of a relatively high order. For this decline in temperature is asymptotic—the lower it sinks the more slowly does it afterwards proceed; and there also becomes associated with rapid ethereal radiation a transmission through gaseous media of relatively low conductivity; both of these factors tend to maintain a medium uniform temperature;[1] and there are in addition the possibilities of radioactivity to be taken into account, as well as of the finitude of the physical universe as maintained by Einstein.[2]

[1] *Cf. Science Progress*, vol. xiii. (1918), p. 310.

[2] "The world is saved from the danger of becoming desolate, for no energy or matter can wander off to infinity, because space is not infinite" (Schlick, *Space and Time*, p. 75).

It must then be sufficient to maintain here that it is a far too hastily drawn conclusion to regard the collective heat interchanges of the physical universe as an irrecoverable loss of its energy. Biologists and philosophers appear to have read far too much here into certain abstract principles formulated by eminent physicists for the purposes of their own science, and to have disregarded the equally important qualifications which these investigators themselves were careful to observe. The assumed unquestionable certainty of such an untoward end to human aspirations may then with some confidence be discounted if not altogether excluded; unless it is accepted in the spirit that "the things that are seen are temporal"; and I may confine myself at present to the philosophical aspects of the subject.

From the philosophic standpoint, then, the really most difficult problem which ought to be considered is that of the nature of time and of change as within the complete whole of Reality—"the ultimate crux of speculation," as Dr. Bosanquet has termed this question; "the place of time, progress and change in the universe. There is nothing so difficult as this problem. . . . The distinction at stake is that between time in the Absolute and the Absolute in time."[1] But at this preliminary stage in our own enquiry it is perfectly justifiable, I believe, to defer any consideration of this so fundamental difficulty, provided that we do not disregard its existence and its importance. For its solution is not to be attempted through any absolute denial of reality to change and to time; these entities are not, that is, to be condemned and altogether banished from the realm of real being; nor again, can

[1] *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, pp. 125, 126.

they be regarded as "mere appearances," because there never are "mere" appearances. The question, in other words, is not that of their reality, *as* reality, but of the *degree* of their reality; not of their reality in its reference to and bearing upon the reality of other categories of being, such as space or mind or quantity, but of their reality in its relation to the nature of the Whole or the Absolute, within which, as it were, all that we know or experience "lives and moves and has its being."

It is perfectly legitimate therefore, subject to these more ulterior considerations, to accord some degree of reality to change and to time. For whatever difficulties attend the concept of a changing and developing Whole, still the world which we know would be altogether unintelligible to us if it were deprived of these attributes; and the analysis of its systematically unified nature then yields, in my opinion, the conclusions that

(*a*) all high values not only are, but must necessarily be, rare and restricted;
(*b*) they can exist only upon a basis or against a background of lower values;
(*c*) all change, taken in its entirety, necessarily results in the production of individuals whose modes or types of organisation become increasingly higher without assignable limits.

The third of these propositions is obviously the most important; and their consideration is best begun from the principle—already repeatedly insisted upon—that nowhere in existence do we find absolute simplicity, in the sense (that is) of complete homogeneity or total absence of all systematic structure. This does

not imply, however, that such concepts as homogeneity or simplicity are inconceivable or unnecessary; they are, on the contrary, often indispensable, particularly for the purposes of science. But, from the philosophic standpoint, they are always abstract—always descriptive of elements that have been isolated, by the analytic activity of the mind, from the matrix within which they enjoy real existence. They have been thus isolated and abstracted, of course, because only by so proceeding can the human mind attain to any accurate understanding of the nature of the real world; but this real world, in its reality, can be adequately and truly apprehended only after these, its innumerable constituents, once they have been dissected out and fully characterised, become reinstated within that complex whole which it is their proper nature to constitute and to maintain. This procedure indeed—this process of resynthesis based upon a prior analysis—is that which is actually followed, in its own specific way, by every science without exception. Thus Geometry advances from its infinitesimal points and insubstantial lines and surfaces to the concrete wholes of n-dimensional space, and Algebra attains similarly its infinite series and its more and more complex orders of quantity. The physicist builds up his elemental point-events into the "Passage of Nature," to adopt Dr. A. N. Whitehead's term,[1] just as Dr. Alexander, as a philosopher, constructs from them the universe as an infinitely deepening complex of space-time.[2] Such concepts as force, mass, energy—the elementary indispensables of all science—are unmeaning and valueless apart from the rôle they play within our wider knowledge of the

[1] *The Concept of Nature; The Principles of Natural Knowledge.*
[2] *Space, Time and Deity.*

real physical world in its full completeness. All these instances alike enforce the radical fallacy of attributing fundamental reality to any of the abstract elements of the whole, rather than to that infinitely complexly structured whole itself which these elements constitute and wherein alone they energise and act.

This result at once implies that every thing or object can be truly understood only in its relations to its environment. But here again what is a commonplace of experience must have its meaning deepened and expanded. For by "environment" we usually denote the merely "immediate" environment, simply because to determine the character of this is amply sufficient for the limited aims of ordinary knowledge, or, indeed, of any special science. But it is obvious that any limits thus assigned to an "environment" are more or less artificial and arbitrary; they depend at bottom only on the particular standpoint that has been taken. As knowledge increases it is patent that the meaning of "environment" continually expands, and that it must in the end become—for knowledge at its widest—nothing less than the universe as a whole.

> . . . but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

"In the least of substances," said Leibniz, "eyes as piercing as those of God could read the whole sequel of the things of the universe";[1] and the ideal of philosophy—an ideal of course ever unattainable—is to comprehend the universe as a complex of interrelated individual systems, and each of these systems,

[1] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 159. Contrast Wordsworth's—

> A primrose by a river's brim . . .

on the other hand, as indissolubly connected with, and therefore in its nature expressive of, the Reality which includes and transcends itself.[1]

Thus there emerges from these premises a further fundamental implication. For since every Real is (in the first place) systematically complex and (secondly) in continuous and intimate connection with its total environment, it must follow that no attribute or quality of any system can be altogether negligible and purposeless. Rather must each one of its diverse features, when thoroughly understood, indicate some definite connection or relation with its environing world—with spheres of environment, that is, which become more and more remote without assignable limits. This is true, as Dr. Bosanquet has pointed out with special reference to the general nature of individuality, of even so extremely complex and highly developed a system as the self. "The self, which makes the environment, is itself all soaked in environment. You cannot say where self ends and environment begins. Nature, conceived as an environment, can hardly be reckoned as less than the whole detail of thing and fact which enters into the world of the self."[2] This instance is doubly instructive, for it exhibits the application of the principle of correlation between a system and the universe to a case of great intricacy and extreme differentiation and—as indeed naturally follows—it illustrates the wide extent of the environment with which such a system always, as a whole, interacts.

Every attribute, then, connects its system to a sector, more or less extensive as the case may be, of the whole possible environment. It is only by grasping

[1] *Cf.* Dr. McTaggart, *Commentary on Hegel's Logic*, sec. 288.
[2] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 360.

this principle that we attain a truly philosophic apprehension of any given system, as distinguished from a scientific understanding of it, which always selects and emphasises some particular group of its total relations. Philosophy seeks to relate the object truly to the universe—to assign it its due place and value within the Whole; and for this purpose it must employ, if not indeed create, its own special methods and criteria. Such a task, in its full details, is certainly beyond the competence of human intelligence; for every object, even the apparently most trivial, is really inexhaustible and unique; in principle nevertheless the work is feasible and indeed obligatory.

It is necessary, however, to carry this argument a step further, for what has been said hitherto applies to the real world when its subsidiary systems are regarded as being static. But the Universe is throughout its whole extent unceasingly dynamic, and when this is taken into account a further fundamentally important result logically follows.[1]

As I have attempted to show in what precedes, every system, in virtue of the totality of its attributes —*i.e.* of its complete intrinsic character—is connected with an environment as general and as extensive as is possible. In its scientific bearings, we have already found this to be maintained by Dr. Whitehead in his statement that every event in the entire world of natural process—in the "Passage of Nature"—is "modified by the ingression of each electron into nature (which) modifies to some extent the character of every event. Thus the character of the stream of events bears marks of the existence of every other electron throughout the

[1] It will be remembered that change has been accepted for the purpose of this stage of our enquiry, as a real character of the world.

universe. A scientific object such as a definite electron is a systematic correlation of the characters of all events throughout all nature. The electron is its whole field of force." [1] And if this is true of electrons—of the ultimate elements of the physical universe at present discerned—it must apply equally to all other real systems.

What now does this position involve when it is considered in its bearings upon that increasing complexity which has characterised universal evolution? Such an advance in complex structure must take the form of the appearance of some new character additional to those already possessed. But still further, since its existing properties as a whole already relate a system to a range of environment as wide as is possible, the newly developed attribute can connect it only with some sector of the external whole which is more restricted and specialised than any hitherto — simply because to all sections wider than this the system is completely related already.

In the actual world, however, such increased complexity is never limited to one system, or to some few, but occurs universally. This universality then further implies that there must be, with reference to any given system, an increasing restriction and specialisation on both sides—that is, both in the system itself and in the whole of its environment; for this environment is itself composed of other similar systems—similar, that is, in principle, not in definite specific details. Every advance in complexity therefore, especially when it occurs *pari passu* with a parallel advance in

[1] *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 158-160. My own philosophic theory here was written in complete ignorance of Dr. Whitehead's scientific standpoint.

the environment, must involve constantly higher specialisation, and therefore increased localisation and restriction—a sensitiveness of response to ever narrower and narrower combinations of stimuli.

Thus the first result deducible from our initial principle of the systematic unity of changing reality is that the most complex and specialised, the highest and most valuable, entities in the world are also—necessarily and inevitably—the rarest and most restricted, both in their occurrence and their range. On the other hand, the more widely spread are any systems, the simpler and the lower must be their category and value; so that what at first sight appeared as a paradox—if not indeed as a positive defect—in the nature of reality is found to be an inevitable result of its inherently systematic and dynamic character.

Before passing on to the further aspects of this subject, it may be pointed out that an extremely complex system may not present itself, at first sight, *as* complex. On the contrary, many such systems exhibit an appearance of comparative simplicity which may be regarded as detracting very materially from the applicability of this entire argument; and this refers not to the innumerable instances in which the basal complexity is concealed from our native power of observation, as in the case of internally situated organs or molecular structure and activity, but to such products of art and emotion and religion as make a simple and direct appeal to human nature—a picture or a poem, a song or a psalm.

But such exceptions, in fact, go far towards proving the principle they are taken to impugn, for their "simplicity" is always an *æsthetic* simplicity. It is

invariably the result, that is to say, of the harmonious co-operation of a number of diverse elements—and usually of an extremely large number whose limits of difference are very wide.[1] This becomes patent to the most superficial analysis of the situation, although this does not mean that any degree of analysis is fully adequate for the final explanation of æsthetic beauty. With that, however, we are not here concerned; it is sufficient to point out that the "simplicity" in question is not in itself deceptive, but on the contrary essentially real and highly valuable. But on the other hand, each of these characteristics—simplicity, reality, value—proves to be based upon an underlying and indispensable intricacy of detailed elemental structure. "Only in the very greatest poets, and in these when they are at their best, do we find this inexplicable and overwhelming simplicity, the outcome of faultless instinct acting on elemental emotion. It is the ultimate magic of art." [2]

It may be worth while alluding also to the distinction which was drawn by Hegel, and which he evidently regarded as being highly significant, between Nature and Spirit. "The world of spirit and the world of nature continue to have this distinction, that the latter moves only in a recurring cycle, while the former certainly also makes progress." [3] The contrast here suggested is altogether too absolute, and is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental unity of the Idea, and of the world of nature as one phase of its self-manifestation. For "the percipient Idea"—that

[1] Here again the exceptions—such as simple curves, or phrases or melodies—are only apparent. There is always operative a large volume of reproduced mental content, either ideal or emotional or both, which gives them their force and intensity.

[2] Professor J. W. Mackail, *Lectures on Greek Poetry*, p. 101.

[3] *Logic* (Wallace), sec. 234.

is the Idea as revealed to sense-perception—"is Nature. This Idea which has Being is Nature." "The process of sense-impression and the manipulations to which it is subjected by intellect presuppose a Reason which is the unity of subject and object, an original identity uniting knowledge to being."[1] On the other hand the distinction is undoubtedly justified in so far as the appearance of non-material—and therefore much more highly sensitive—elements in the "world of spirit" enables development to proceed at once more quickly and more directly than in the material "world of nature"; that is plain psychological matter of fact. But it is most probable that Hegel was influenced by the cyclical theories of natural processes which preceded the evolutionary view; and no doubt our modern philosophies will reveal analogous defects in due season!

Finally with regard to this particular aspect of the subject, the view that is here advocated of the interconnection between advancing complexity and increasing specialisation exhibits the illogicality of creating antitheses between the various categories which thus come into being. Such contrasts, *e.g.*, as have been emphasised between body and soul, matter and life, state and citizen, or ethics and religion, all become equally false as soon as they are pressed to the point of antithetical extremes. It must similarly be futile to attempt to "reconcile" these, simply because there is between them no real opposition. Their differences, erroneously taken to be conflicting, really depend on their respective degrees of complexity and value; they

[1] *Logic*, sec. 244. *Prolegomena*, p. 150. Of course if we persist in interpreting "Idea" subjectively, these principles become altogether unintelligible. *Cf.* "percipient event" in Dr. Whitehead's *Concept of Nature*, p. 107.

should therefore be no more opposed to one another than *e.g.* the childhood and the manhood of any great personality.

The succeeding chapter will continue the consideration of the universal conservation of value.

VIII

THE CONSERVATION OF VALUE: II.

The persistence of lowly forms of organisation is a subject which frequently arises in the discussion of evolution; and the phenomenon is paralleled by the absolute dependence—absolute, *i.e.*, so far as our definite knowledge goes—of many of the higher forms of reality upon lower. Vital processes, *e.g.*—even those of genetic variation and of heredity—occur only upon a basis of specific material constitution, and consciousness again is presented to us, apart from rare possible exceptions whose actuality is not universally accepted, in the most intimate dependence on definite nervous structures and activities. The facts have been variously interpreted by both ancient and modern thought. Dr. Barbour has noticed "the Aristotelian view that the world of our experience constitutes a hierarchy of being, in which lower forms of existence and of life point on to higher forms, and that these latter, in proportion to their elevation in the scale of evolution, represent the highest reality more adequately and more fully."[1] The profundity of this conception, in face of the contemporary lack of scientific information, is a striking index of the intuitive insight of these early thinkers; and it finds a remarkable parallel in the

[1] *The Ethical Approach to Theism*, p. 21.

standpoint of the modern biologist whom I have already quoted so frequently. "The very broad foundations make the superstructure stable. We emphasise the fact that without the broad foundations the superstructure could not be." [1]

This general point of view is undeniably sound. But is it at all possible to go beyond the mere fact—the mere actuality—of these widely ramifying connections and relations, and discover for them, in the nature of reality itself, some basis of logical necessity? [2] If we pursue the analysis of the fundamental principle of the systematic character of reality, I think this is possible.

For if we limit our consideration, for the moment, to that type of individual which, at any given stage in the progressive course of evolution, has attained and exhibits the highest form of development so far possible, and if we further suppose that it acquires—from any cause whatever—a new attribute so that it thereby becomes still more complex, this new character, as has been seen already, must relate the individual in question to a part of its environment more restricted than any hitherto. But this fresh environing sector must obviously be, *ex hypothesi*, less specialised than the individual itself; and therefore the continuance of the additional characteristic—which involves again that of the whole complex system possessing it—will remain possible only while the "lower" environment, to which it is responsive, itself continues to exist. Expressing this conclusion as a perfectly general principle, we may say that every advance in development has been possible only as responsive to, or as against, a wider

[1] Professor J. A. Thomson, *The System of Animate Nature*, p. 402.

[2] *Cf.* the remarks on "logical necessity," p. 54 *ante*.

background or basis of systems of less complexity. The extent and diversity of this background, again, as it is actually observed in Nature, constitutes an immense area from which an infinite number of subdivisions has been demarcated, to each of which there may be developed some markedly specialised responsive characteristic present in some higher individual. Such instances abound in the remarkable phenomena of flower-fertilisation by insects, of symbiotic interrelations, and of mimetic form and coloration throughout the "web of life." Thus we discover the philosophic rationale of the continued existence of entities low in the scale of values to consist in their functions as indispensable stimuli and determinants of higher and more complex individuals; the physical universe as the basis of the realm of life, both within and without itself; the merely vital as the necessary preliminary to consciousness, and human rationality as the foundation of our moral constitution.

There now remains to be considered the most important, as it is the most difficult, conclusion which must, to complete this argument, arise from the systematic unity of the universe. We have to regard Reality as a changing and developing whole—as it appears (that is) both to ordinary and to scientific observation, deferring at this stage the deeper problem, already referred to, of the ultimate status of change within the Whole as such. From this standpoint the question becomes: Is any general character, not only as an observable fact but (further) as logically necessary, inherent in the processes of change taken in their entirety?—considered, that is, apart from any special details with which Science is concerned, and viewed, in the light of their common—though not therefore

equal—contribution to some final result, as all on one common level.

The point of view from which the problem is here approached is radically different from that which is usually adopted. For even if it were generally agreed—and it is not so agreed—that the course of change hitherto has been as a matter of fact from simple to complex, from lower to higher,[1] still there is in this fact in itself no ground of assurance whatever that future development will continue to pursue such a course, so as to bring into existence still greater complexity and still higher values. If, indeed, we were compelled to accept the truth of the ultimate "degradation" of all physical energy, the contrary, apart from some religious principle, would appear to be a better-founded conclusion. We require therefore something more than an inductive proof of the fact of evolutionary progress—we must endeavour to show its inherent necessity in the being and the nature of the world—not only, that is to say, that it actually does take place, but that it must do so necessarily.

I shall begin, then, with the principle of the universality of the connection between cause and effect. When we consider this relation, not in any of its particular cases or subordinate types, but as universal, we at once obtain the familiar conclusion that the real ground, or the complete cause, of any given total phase in the world's development, is to be discerned only in its previous condition taken also in its entirety. We have already found this expressed in Dr. Whitehead's contention that "the character of the stream of events bears marks of the existence of every other electron

[1] These terms are merely relative; as has been argued already, absolute simplicity of character nowhere exists.

throughout the universe"; for "the ingression of objects into events includes the theory of causation."[1] But it may not be superfluous to quote further from this highly valuable presentation, formulated in the terminology of modern Physics, of a well-known point of view. "The passage of nature, which is only another name for the creative force of existence, has no narrow ledge of definite instantaneous present within which to operate. Its operative presence which is now urging nature forward must be sought for throughout the whole, in the remotest past as well as in the narrowest breadth of any present duration."[2] This is equally implied in the philosopher's already cited "All progress is an incessant revision of a first step," to which a somewhat more precise application has been given by Dr. Bosanquet. "For Hegel the planetary, the terrestrial and the climatic influences become organic to consciousness in the concrete soul-life of a race and an individual. . . . It is the world, the environment, which is responsible for the respective differences between the forms of organic evolution."[3] Or it may take that form of attractive paradox which often best expresses a profound truth. "In history," remarks one of our ablest critics of classical literature, "nothing begins and nothing ends; it is not possible to assign any precise date to the birth of the Greek race or the Greek genius."[4]

But this unbroken continuity between the successive phases of world development is obviously only an

[1] Dr. Whitehead does not, however, discuss further the nature of causation (*The Concept of Nature*, p. 146). The terms "object" and "event" also bear special meaning throughout his work; but this leaves the general principle unaffected.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 73.

[3] *The Principle of Individuality*, pp. 178, 150.

[4] Professor Mackail, *Lectures on Greek Poetry*, p. 5.

aspect of the interrelated character of reality—of the Whole as possessing a systematic individuality which is always (to our observation) incomplete, and therefore at every moment is the condition of its succeeding phase. Thus our problem becomes: Is there between these successive total phases any necessary relation? It is agreed that each is throughout determined by its predecessor; is it then possible to ascertain anything as to the definite mode—distinguished, *i.e.*, from the bare fact—of this determination?

It is necessary, in order to do this, to distinguish between the purely scientific, and the more widely philosophical, aspects of causal determination as this manifests itself in its actuality. Every separate instance of the cause-effect relation must then be considered, from the philosophic standpoint, as being really one subordinate element of the *total* causal determination of each phase of the whole by its predecessor —a concept that is emphasised in Dr. Whitehead's analysis of natural processes already frequently referred to. To regard it as a phenomenon wholly independent of this inclusive totality is merely to deal with an artificial abstraction. It is true that science must place an emphasis which is, philosophically, altogether unwarranted, on each separate causal instance *as* separate; for obviously no enquiry, no experiment, could be pursued if the whole universe were considered as determining it. Still this scientific necessity is in truth a philosophical defect, from which there arises the infinite retrogression of causal sequence as the logical outcome of the false isolation of the scientific standpoint; it is plainly due to our disregarding the principle that the only ultimate cause is nothing less than the Whole. "The use of the causal relation"

(to repeat a previous quotation) "in a law is a confession of incomplete knowledge." [1]

But this assertion that each phase of universal development is determined by its predecessor obviously implies that every static system,[2] whatever may be the precise category within which it falls, derives its character from the nature of the Whole, and in this respect itself expresses that nature; everything, *i.e.*, owes its particular character in the end to the nature of the Whole. In other words, the inner structure of every system is the result of all previous change. Its stability and equilibrium therefore depend upon, and are responsive to, the totality of its environing conditions. It is never for a moment severed from its dependence on its total environment, which thus determines equally the maintenance, or the cessation, of its static equilibrium—*i.e.* of its persistence as a system of some kind (for science) or as an "individual" (for philosophy). "There is no creature," remarks Dr. Bosanquet, "that is not partly modelled by the whole; there is none that in partly modelling itself does not give effect to the operation of the whole within it"; to which may be added his citation from Dr. Alexander—"The world as a whole in its forward tendency acts upon our bodily organism"; [3] so that, equally within and without, every object and every organism bears the indelible impress of the action of the Whole.

But science, for certain obvious reasons, is mainly interested rather in the alteration than in the maintenance of static equilibrium; though at the same

[1] Dr. N. R. Campbell, *Physics, The Elements*, p. 67.

[2] It has already been pointed out that no system is absolutely static.

[3] *Meeting of Extremes*, pp. 189, 167.

time, as the sciences become more and more concrete, the direction of interest insensibly changes; and the higher levels of culture—History, Art, Religion—are concerned with complex and stable systems as such. It therefore becomes necessary to consider the implications of the principle that every change is not merely —as hitherto—a consequence or effect of some prior restricted change, but, more truly, a response—a reaction—to some alteration in the total environment.[1] Only by adopting this universal standpoint can the futile infinite regression which the scientific cause-effect sequence invariably involves be avoided.

Every natural or real system, then, has in the first place attained its detailed internal structure, and equally the whole of its externally manifested attributes, as a result of all previous change; and (secondly) while this structure and these attributes are retained unaltered, the maintenance of its equilibrium is responsive to the totality of its environing conditions. This second consideration, however, is very frequently disregarded, or it receives, at least, less than its proper emphasis. For we always tend to regard active change, rather than stable quiescence, as being responsive to outer stimulus; whereas, as I have endeavoured to show, external stimuli are operative in both cases alike; and further, we always relate every system to far too limited a sphere of environment, forgetting that the real environment can be nothing less than the Whole. But if we accept these two principles in their fullest significance, and if we also remember that every system has some degree of complexity—that every

[1] *Cf.*, *e.g.*, the instance of so complex a real as the Self, already referred to in its connection with the environment, p. 66 *ante*. To extend its application to super-selves—church, or party, or state—is a simple matter.

system (in other words) is heterogeneous or differentiated—then it appears logically to follow that when any change to which it is sensitive occurs in the environment, its heterogeneous elements must respond differentially to the external stimulus.

But this essentially differential response really means that there arise within the primary system fresh subordinate systems which did not, as such, previously exist; and this origination of new systems necessarily results in an advance in systematisation—in an increased specialisation and increased heterogeneity.[1]

Such an advance, still further, must proceed continuously and without any assignable limits, for three reasons. (1) The stimuli which act upon every actual system are many and varied, and each of them contributes its share to the final compound result. (2) A still more fundamental point is that each sub-system included in the complex primary system [2] exists within the immediate environment formed by its fellow sub-systems; and each of these, again, has its own degree of complexity; we have, in short, system within system continuously. Therefore as new sub-systems originate (in the manner just suggested), every succeeding change within their primary constitutes (to some degree) a change outside some of these, and so tends, in consonance with the general principle, to induce within these some still further specialisation and higher complexity *ad infinitum*. (3) Every system without exception affects reflexly its own environing systems; what are effects within thus become transmitted as causes without—and this, if we accept Dr. Whitehead's

[1] *Cf.* Dr. Alexander's expression of this principle in terms of space-time. "Existents are complexes of space-time. As time goes on, higher and higher complexes of the spatio-temporal stuff emerge" (*Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xviii. p. 417).

[2] *E.g.* the electrons in an atom; the cells in an organism; citizens in a State.

presentation of electronic physical activity, on a literally universal scale.[1] Every system, in other terms, itself forms part of some environment, so that the higher complexity induced within its own sphere modifies its influence as a centre of activity, thus passing outwards again to bring about correlative responses in all other systems outside itself.

There appear then to be weighty logical reasons for holding that since the universe is throughout its whole extent systematic—is interconnected, and everywhere characterised by relevant interrelation, or is under the sway of Law—therefore a continuous advance in its heterogeneity, in complexity, in value is (not merely actual but) logically inevitable and necessary. Thus all the diverse values of the universe are conserved and multiplied; all that we call destruction is only such in appearance, and serves in reality unending reconstruction. "Nature is Nature," we may conclude in the words of Professor J. A. Thomson, "for an increasing and transcendent purpose."[2]

But before considering the further implications of these principles, another possible difficulty may be briefly referred to. I have just argued that "every system derives its character from the nature of the Whole and expresses that nature."[3] It may, however, be suggested that the advancing complexity is not objectively real, but is never anything more than the expanding comprehension of the structure of the universe by and within human thought, and is therefore merely a subjective phenomenon. For if it is impossible sharply to distinguish between a thing and its environment, or between the thing and the Whole,

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 68, on the ingression of electrons.
[2] *Op. cit.* p. 345. [3] *Cf. ante*, p. 79.

then—it may be objected—every thing and every event already possesses, in reality, the complexity of the Whole, and the sole advance that can occur is the growth of the mind's apprehension of this reality. Everything that exists, in short, already possesses its highest degree of complexity, and lower types and degrees are thus not real existents, but are simply errors of or within the human mind.

Any such interpretation, however, is wholly foreign to the standpoint adopted throughout this volume. It can arise, I believe, only from confusing *implication* with *identification*, and at the same time ignoring the essentially dynamic nature of the Universe. It is true that every system implies other systems and also (in principle) implies the Whole. But while systems thus *imply* each other, they are never *identical* with each other. On the contrary, systematic structure of itself necessitates distinction and is impossible without it; systems therefore are distinguishable by our thought only because they are distinct in reality. Every thing then partakes of the complexity of the Universe to its degree and capacity; and this in such a way that its participation connects it with the Whole. But the thing still remains what it is—a distinct system characterised by its own objective form and degree of complexity; its own complexity, in short, implies that of the Universe, but is not therefore identical with this; just as, while every citizen implies the State, still no citizen can be identical with the State. But further, the Universe is essentially dynamic, and never static. Everywhere there exists interconnectedness between dynamic systems; for the principle that these may be distinguished from each other does not involve their separation and isolation from each other. Every

system thus implies the Whole, as a *changing* system; its very changes therefore imply correlated changes in all other systems; and when these changes are considered on a sufficiently wide scale both in space and in time—alike in Science and in History—then we find that objectively real advancing complexity with which I have just dealt.[1]

To this it need only be added that all change is change *within* the Universe, not change *of* the Universe, as Universe. This, however, is a principle only indirectly related to the specifically ethical problem of obligation, so that I need merely refer further to Dr. Bosanquet's recent discussion, together with an article by myself on " Change and the Unchanging Whole." [2]

[1] The realist standpoint of the present volume is more explicitly presented in Chap. XVIII., on " Knowledge and the Real World."

[2] *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, chaps. ix. and x. *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. xx. p. 151.

IX

DETERMINATION, NECESSITY AND FREEDOM

It will be recalled that the original purpose of the long enquiry pursued throughout the two preceding chapters was to establish a definite point of departure for ethics—an assured basis for ethical theory—in the conception of the universe as an endlessly evolving, organised and systematic Whole, ever advancing in heterogeneity, in richness and in value, and so attaining "a richer shape, a fuller reality."[1] The arguments for regarding these characteristics as not only actually, but further as necessarily, existent within the whole of Reality have now been concluded; but it is obvious that the application of the principle within the sphere of ethics demands something still more fundamental —demands, *i.e.*, a positive criterion of progress and of value; for to speak of "higher value," "increasing richness," "unbroken progress," without stating the manner in which such an advance is to be discerned and estimated would be illogical.

A standard of value is therefore necessary — a standard which must be capable of universal application, and which must therefore itself be universal. It must, that is to say, both constitute all the higher values

[1] *Cf. ante*, pp. 47, 48.

in themselves, and at the same time connect the entire range of values with one another. It must, again, be shared alike—but not equally—by all the varyingly complex systems of Reality. And to find such a universally basal criterion we must turn, once more, to the principle of the systematic nature of Reality, expressing, however, that nature somewhat differently—here in terms of "determination," and (further) of the various degrees of "self-determination" which are possessed by the different categories of Being. The philosophical meaning, then, of "determination" and of "self-determination" is the next point to be considered. For just as we found that Utilitarian ethics, in spite of its indisputable value, still lacked a "genuine ought," [1] so it would seem to be agreed that "the idea of development according to law, while of great importance for Ethics, does not of itself inform us as to the worth or meaning of life or the essential nature of morality"; [2] an assertion amply confirmed by Spencer's confession that "the doctrine of evolution has not furnished guidance to the extent I had hoped." [3] At the same time, as I have already remarked, it is from the "idea of development according to law" that the nature of determination must be approached.

In the preceding chapters the Universe has already been characterised in terms of certain universal attributes—of system, organisation, individuality—which obviously denote different aspects of the one Whole. What John Caird has said with regard to Spinoza's thought has a close application here. "The attributes are not complementary properties, the omission of any one of which leaves the whole imperfect, but each the

[1] *Ante*, p. 2.

[2] Albee, *History of English Utilitarianism*, p. 268.

[3] *Negative Beneficence*, Pref.

same perfect whole contemplated in a different aspect. They are not correlative members of an organic unity which have no independent reality apart from each other, but parallel, independent, equivalent manifestations of the same infinite object." [1] If then determination is another such universal character—and only so can it constitute the required criterion of value—it also must be interpreted as an essential feature of the Whole, and brought thus into appropriate relation with its complementary fundamentals.

First, then, as to Organisation. When we regard the Universe, constituted as it is by sub-systems of individuals, as a whole, but without any special reference to any one individual rather than to another, we perceive its organisation—that infinitely complex scheme of interrelation between the various dynamic systems in virtue of which the whole itself subsists. "Organism is the principle of things. The world is an organisation." [2] From such a standpoint organisation is a ubiquitous attribute; it exists everywhere, and everywhere, in a certain sense, equally; it would be impaired, and again in principle equally impaired, by the defect of any constituent whatever.

But it is also possible to regard the world from another point of view—in respect, *i.e.*, to the relation subsisting between it, again, as a whole, and any selected individual whatsoever among its elements; and it is this mode of relation that is signified by "determination," when the term is employed in its strict philosophical sense,[3] which must however be sharply distinguished from the popular usage of "determinism."

[1] *Spinoza*, p. 150. [2] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 115; citing Schelling.
[3] Its more limited logical meaning is allied with this, but is not here in question.

And since determination and organisation are both alike aspects of the one universe, it follows further that each may (in principle) be adequately expressed in terms of the other. A complete knowledge would be able thus correlatively to interpret them; while the distinctions between the several sciences and allied departments of knowledge rest in a great degree upon the prominence which each gives to the one or the other of these two attributes. Organisation then presents itself as synthetic, concrete, static; determination on the other hand as analytic, abstract, dynamic. Investigation of the one deals with the finished construction as a whole and is therefore in the main descriptive; enquiry into the other concerns the diverse forces which generate and maintain this whole, and so becomes explanatory; and whether the contrast may be still further developed depends largely on our definition of the various terms. Thus art, *e.g.* (or, it may be, certain sciences) may be held to be concerned with wholes; other sciences (or perhaps all science) with constituent parts; but exactly where the distinction is drawn is of less importance than the truth that it can never become anything more than a distinction —can never become an absolute separation; but remains always simply a matter of the selected standpoint and its appropriate method.[1]

It is true again that it is extremely difficult to form any adequate conception of the detailed character of this determinative relation between the whole of reality and its constituents; but this difficulty arises not so much from any inherent weakness in the idea itself as from our ignorance of the nature and content of the

[1] I consider the distinction between "static" and "dynamic" further below, p. 97.

world. None the less the application of the concept of the various modes of determination results in the removal of certain long-standing difficulties;—of the apparent contradiction between freedom and necessity, in whatever guise this stubborn antithesis appears; as also of the obscurities which have been seen to attend the infinite retrogression of causes and effects; to which may be added the contrasted natures of life and matter, or of volition and natural law.

Determination, as the general relation between the whole and its individual elements, is universal; the forms or modes which it assumes present on the other hand an infinite variety. In the first place, wherever experience discovers a content which may from any point of view be properly regarded as a true whole, we have there an analogue of the ideal type of this determinative relation. In the connection, *e.g.*, between the state and every individual citizen, in so far as each is "equal before the law"; in the union between the living body and each and all of its organs; in the intimacy within which a religion unites its disciples; or in the balance and symmetry of the creations of art; in each of these instances the relation subsisting between the including whole and each of its constituents constitutes one distinct mode or form of determination. This appears in the last instance to be static, in the others to be dynamic in varying degrees. But if we regard the static condition as being—what it essentially is—the outcome of the balance of opposing forces, this distinction again becomes merely a matter of the point of view. The determination certainly is in these cases never complete, never perfect; it is indeed the function of the critic, of the innovator, even of the revolutionist, to point the way to still fuller

and more adequate determination; and if this assertion is regarded as in any sense an argument for "authority," or a depreciation of "freedom," then the true import of these terms, together with that of determination itself, has not yet been apprehended.

But if determination is really universal it must obviously exist even where experience does not present to us wholes such as those just alluded to; and it then assumes a form much more consonant with its usually accepted meaning—the form namely of cause and effect. The cause, as it is said, determines the effect; and the more adequate the cause, the more efficient is the determination. At first sight this view seems to contradict what has just been presented as the truer or ideal form of determination; for the cause is never a whole of which the effect is a part; nor can we say with accuracy, *e.g.*, that life causes its distinguishable processes. It is necessary therefore to connect these two apparently conflicting modes of determination with each other; and this it is easily possible to do by recalling the principle already cited from Mill's *Logic*, which defines the real cause as the total sum of conditions.[1] When this truth is pressed to its logical conclusion it becomes obvious that the only truly adequate cause must be the whole, and thus we obtain once more the *philosophic* concept of determination, which is further supported by that infinite retrogression of the causal sequence which has already been emphasised as arising from the final insufficiency of every actual cause. Cause and effect, in short, are (regarded philosophically) only abstractions; useful and indeed indispensable abstractions, which, however, always tend to be subsumed under concepts less abstract than them-

[1] *Ante*, p. 56.

selves—always (in other words) tend to become identical with the dynamic process of the concrete whole. Here again Mill may be safely appealed to, both because of the high importance assigned by him to the causal relation, and the ability with which he has analysed its nature. "Laws (of causation)," we find, "are resolved into laws more general than themselves, more certain, more universally true; they are in fact proved not to be themselves laws of nature, the character of which is to be universally true, but results of laws of nature, which may be only true conditionally"[1] —which are in fact mere abstractions, because isolated, for certain specific purposes, from the full body of natural law.

But though these two principal modes under which determination appears—the synthetic form characteristic of the whole, and the analytic mode peculiar to the causal sequence—are thus seen readily to merge into each other, still the causal principle itself always presents another essential feature which at first sight appears to be wholly absent from the synthetic aspect—*i.e.* the attribute of *necessity*; for the cause is regarded not only as determining the effect, but further as determining it *necessarily*. On the other hand, if all citizens are equal in legal rights they can scarcely be said to be necessarily so. Nor again is it easy to see that the proportions of a work of art are necessarily what they are; they might, it would seem, just as easily be different. It is true that the admission of such a general possibility is largely a matter of training; as Dr. Bosanquet tersely expresses it, "Bad taste is bad logic, and bad logic is bad taste."[2] But this alternative contention is usually advanced in defence of

[1] *Logic*, bk. iii. chap. 12. [2] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 7.

yet another principle felt to be of fundamental value —a principle, too, always absent from causation—the principle of freedom. The artist, the citizen, the state: each of these is regarded as being in some real sense free—free from law or tradition, from convention or compulsion. In somewhat the same spirit, if not in exactly the same terms, freedom is generally attributed to all the higher categories of reality—to life and mind, to creative imagination and the moral consciousness. Thus, *e.g.*, Bergson: "It is at the great and solemn crises that we choose in defiance of what is conventionally called a motive, and this absence of any tangible reason is the more striking the deeper our freedom goes." [1]

Thus even when determination is regarded as a universal attribute, and further as manifesting itself in the two modes—causal and non-causal—which are nevertheless only dual aspects of its universality, still there remain, apparently "diametrically opposed to each other," the characteristics of necessity and freedom.[2] And while causation, as such, is primarily a scientific rather than an ethical category, freedom and necessity, on the other hand, are principles pertaining essentially to the moral consciousness and to ethical theory; from which, indeed, they have been appropriated by scientific thought. Finally, the method of treating the relation between them has always had a marked influence on all ethical systems; so that the attitude to be adopted on this point is a matter of the greatest importance.

The consideration of specifically ethical problems

[1] *Time and Free-Will*, p. 170.

[2] "Matter is necessity, consciousness is freedom, diametrically opposed to each other" (Bergson, *Mind-Energy*, p. 13). On this point *cf.* further p. 102 below.

is best advanced here, in my opinion, by beginning from a somewhat unusual standpoint—that is, by fully acknowledging the reality of this apparently absolute antithesis between freedom and necessity. I do not mean that their seeming contradiction can never be overcome or understood, but that their opposition should, at the outset, neither be weakened nor denied. Both the long history of the controversy and the passion with which it has been conducted prove that it springs from what is felt to be a deep-seated contrast between different realms of being, of which one is higher, more valuable, more akin to the spirit of man, than is the other. It would be easy to argue that speculation is here concerned with an unreal issue created by mere ignorance and prejudice, or that the terms around which the dispute centres may be so interpreted, by a more thoroughgoing analysis, that nothing worthy of serious argument remains; as *e.g.* in Mill's treatment of the question, which results in freedom being resolved into one type of causal necessity,[1] and this latter again into nothing but "invariable sequence between every event and some special combination of antecedent conditions. Any *must* in the case, any necessity, other than the unconditional universality of the fact, we know nothing of."[2] Here, manifestly, the opposition has been overcome simply by abolishing one of the terms of the antithesis. Somewhat akin is the position expressed by Mr. Whitaker: "In asserting 'apparent

[1] Sidgwick attributes a position somewhat akin to this to Plato and Aristotle. *History of Ethics*, p. 68.

[2] *Examination of Hamilton*, p. 500. The "unconditional universality" again is limited in its character. "The law of causation must be received not as a law of the universe, but of that portion of it only which is within the range of our means of sure observation" (*Logic*, bk. iii. chap. xxi.). Similarly the "must"—the "necessity"—of mathematical principles vanishes. "This character of necessity ascribed to the truths of mathematics is an illusion" (*Ibid.* bk. ii. chap. v. sec. 1).

freedom of choice' we are not asserting anything metaphysical, but a mere datum like the existence of our thoughts and feelings and of certain objects." [1]

In the opposite direction, again, our philosophical difficulties are only increased if, while maintaining its indubitable reality, we relegate the contradiction to a region beyond experience itself. Thus for Kant, *e.g.*, freedom was noumenal. "In his system freedom is theoretically quite unintelligible, but absolutely indispensable in practice from the consciousness of responsibility." [2] "It is impossible to establish the existence of freedom on the basis of knowledge; for nothing falls within the sphere of knowledge except phenomena subject to the law of natural causation. Freedom is only then an idea of reason whose objective reality in itself is doubtful. There is no possible knowledge of a free being." [3] Other great philosophers, again, have regarded both entities as in their own nature inconceivable, though not unreal. Such an extreme position is that of Fichte: "I am altogether my own creation. Through absolute freedom, not by a transition but by a leap, do we raise ourselves to rationality." [4] Similarly that acute thinker, Sir William Hamilton: "How the will can possibly be free must remain to us wholly incomprehensible. We cannot conceive a free volition. As little can we conceive the alternative on which necessity is affirmed"; [5] and curiously enough this view is in the main endorsed by William James: "My belief is that the question

[1] *Theory of Abstract Ethics*, p. 21.

[2] Windelband, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 252.

[3] Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, pp. 331, 332. Abbott, *Metaphysic of Morals*, p. 115.

[4] *Werke*, vol. i. p. 298. [5] *Lectures on Metaphysics*, vol. ii. p. 412.

of free-will is insoluble on strictly psychologic grounds." [1]

All these methods appear to me to be merely evasions of the real issue. It would be far more logical and more profitable to accept freedom and necessity as terms which do adequately characterise two distinct types of phenomena or processes which are equally real, and each of which conforms to its own principle of activity, in such a way as at first sight to appear totally incompatible in its nature with the other; so that it is perfectly justifiable to contrast physical forces with life or spiritual experience, and the rigid necessity of a mathematical axiom with the idealism of a poem. We feel, and we feel quite rightly, that there is something in the last of these which is absent from the other, something in which, while it remains what it is, the first cannot participate; and this holds true even when we are able to detect some quality which is common to all of them. The Energy of the physical world, *e.g.*, is not the Energy of mind; the truth of the axiom is not that of the poem. We appear to move in two wholly different regions, at two different levels; and we deem it to be unreasonable and untrue to reality to seek to reduce the higher to the lower. In ethics and practical morality therefore this problem cannot be evaded by any of the devices which have just been referred to. It is, in its actuality, of fundamental importance; "the essence of all ethics is shut up in the word Autonomy." [2] Ethics thus demands a *real freedom* actually operative in the sphere of our experience, not a mechanical

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 572. *Cf.* a more recent view: "If we are free, the self that is free must be outside the flow of events, and itself timeless" (Dean Inge, *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xxi. p. 9).

[2] Wallace, *Lectures*, p. 125.

fatalism which only ignorance mistakes for liberty; but, on the other hand, it cannot deny that necessity is an *equally real* element in the universal process of development. When thus presented, the issue obviously appears as a fundamental contradiction, both in theory and in practice; and we shall now proceed to attempt to remove this contradiction, and so to bring freedom and necessity into an essential and real harmony with each other.

X

NECESSITY AND FREEDOM RECONCILED

1. The Static and the Dynamic

If then this accepted antithesis is to be resolved, the opposed concepts must be retained throughout in their entirety; and since therefore this implies that the one cannot be reduced to the other, the only alternative is that they must in some way become connected together and brought within one unity, of which they then become two diverse phases in which one and the same real agency continuously operates, only under different conditions, so that everywhere it creates those contrasted types of individuality or organisation which present themselves either as "free" or as "necessarily determined."

The reality of such a unified continuity of process throughout all phenomena is steadily becoming more and more manifest as knowledge expands; although it had also been discerned by the intuitive genius of Greek philosophy. "The nature of the soul presents itself to Aristotle as a matter of gradation. In proportion as the order of Nature takes on a certain individual and apparently purposive form, the problem of mind begins and it continues upwards into con-

sciousness. We are led to look at the mind as a sort of struggle towards unity." [1] To this view the modern interpretation of Nature is closely allied. "The outstanding fact about organic evolution is the increasing dominance of Mind. . . . Nature is Nature for an increasing and transcendent purpose. It seems as if part of that purpose were the emergence of individuality, mind, freedom." [2] And again: "It is all but impossible to distinguish Nature from mind. To separate them is impossible. . . . You cannot say where self ends and environment begins. Nature, conceived as an environment, can hardly be reckoned as less than the whole detail of thing and fact which enters into the world of the self." [3] Similarly, only with reference to its bearing upon logical theory, Dr. Bosanquet insists that "we can go no further till we have brought freedom — by itself an inadequate idea — together with causal necessity in (one) conception." [4]

In all these utterances alike the fundamental feature is plainly gradation, continuity, emergence— not creation, or at least not creation in the popular sense, by magic out of nothing as it were: it may perhaps best be called the universal application of the concept of evolution. Such a gradual emergence or unfolding may be elucidated in several different ways. We may, as it were, argue backwards, or read the end into the beginning. Thus we find Wallace writing: "I can attach no meaning to the statement that reason or morality was made out of something utterly other than itself. Non-reason does never beget

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *The Psychology of the Moral Self*, p. 6.
[2] Professor Thomson, *The System of Animate Nature*, pp. 400, 345.
[3] Dr. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality*, pp. 367, 360.
[4] *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 129.

reason nor non-moral moral." [1] Or alternatively, the beginning may be in various ways expanded and expressed in terms of the end. Again we turn to Wallace: "The world is all an ordered and co-operant unity. In the Aristotelian realm of nature lives a principle quasi-intelligent and quasi-volitional. It acts, if not with a purpose, yet never in vain. Nature is struggling towards greater perfection. Movement is not mere locomotion, but is the path of self-realisation." [2] Similarly, as we have already seen, for Hegel: "The planetary, the terrestrial, and the climatic influences become organic to consciousness in the concrete soul-life of a race and an individual. . . . It is the world, the environment, which is responsible for the respective differences between the forms of organic evolution." [3]

But all such interpretations, in spite of their profound truth, are after all impressionistic rather than analytic. Slightly to modify a familiar maxim, we appear to be trusting in unity where we cannot trace it; for all these elucidations alike fail to exhibit *explicitly* that basis of detailed fact on which they really rest. This ultimate and fundamental basis is only to be found, I think, in the continuously advancing degrees of the complexity of organisation in the world, and in the correlative changes which this uninterrupted ascent of itself inevitably generates in the modes of that universal determination which is dynamically operative throughout its entire extent and duration.

Here again, as previously in the case of evolution, it is unnecessary to establish the facts in themselves. The problem concerns their logical interpretation; and

[1] *Lectures*, p. 109. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 33, 34.
[3] Dr. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality*, pp. 178, 150.

this again turns entirely on the proper appreciation of the full significance of the unquestioned advancing complexity of organisation. On this point our ordinary ideas, while sufficiently accurate so far as they go, are yet extremely inadequate because too superficial and mechanical. The scientific and philosophic mind has not yet acquired a deep enough insight into the essentially *dynamic* nature of reality, in spite of those philosophies which have sought to represent Being as will or impulse or unceasing action; thought is still too much swayed by the impressions acquired from the comparatively unchanging "things" of the everyday world. To this extent Bergson's polemic against the "intellect" (if we choose to distinguish thus sharply one aspect of the mind's activity) is quite justified; but it is justified, not because the intellect is essentially incapable, but rather, on the contrary, because it has not yet manifested its full capacity, has not yet exerted its greatest powers; too easily satisfied with first impressions, it has not bestirred itself to penetrate beneath the surface of its primitive concepts. The "things" with which the mind can operate while it sluggishly remains at the level of naïve experience—the "things" which it manufactures to supplement what it receives from nature—are necessarily fixed and stable. They form "that everyday picture of the world, of sensible objects and events 'in disconnection dead and spiritless' which we take for reality, the origin alike of torpor and superficiality."[1] But these its earliest achievements must not be taken as the measure of its proper powers; they are but the playthings of its infancy—tools for the hand rather than constructions of the mind; and even the tools

[1] Professor Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 130.

of modern civilisation have transcended their initial stage of clear-cut rigidity, and have come to include the impalpable ether itself. It is in consonance with this poverty and limitation of the everyday level of mind that the static and the dynamic, instead of being understood as diverse aspects of one reality which is differently conditioned, have thus come to be not only distinguished from, but opposed to, each other. The atomic units of the material world *e.g.* were conceived as infinitesimal spheres of almost infinite hardness immersed as it were in an ocean of fluid energy, "invisible from their minuteness, persistent in duration and unchangeable in their properties, unmodified starting-points of unceasing activity," as Lotze has expressed it.[1] Since, therefore, it was obviously extremely difficult to comprehend how such static entities could in any way affect each other, their incapacity to furnish the basis for life and consciousness, as later stages in one continuous evolution, was equally obvious; and any gradual emergence of these higher categories, as progressively more and more complete realisations of the exhaustless potentiality of one and the same reality, was thus wholly inconceivable. But all these difficulties arose, here as so often elsewhere, simply from the falsity of the original antithesis. For the static is not really the opposite of the dynamic; it is only one aspect of the latter, but completely misconceived because too hastily and superficially apprehended. The passivity of the static condition is altogether illusory; for it is due not to the absence or the suspension of active forces, but to their continuous (though for the time being exactly balanced) opposition. The static, *i.e.* in any ultimate sense of

[1] *Microcosmus*, vol. i. pp. 31, 33.

BERKELEY BAPTIST

the term implying total absence of force or energy, never exists; no element in the whole of reality is ever at bottom passive or inert. Reality is dynamic, and abhors a sinecure.

But the value of this principle is nevertheless practically destroyed if its dynamism is represented as directed upon any content that itself remains still inert. Such a view retains unimpaired the deceptive antithesis of a superficial theory, and constitutes the radical defect of Bergson's consideration of the higher categories of Being. Life is, for him, an impulse acting on matter which is, in its own proper nature, completely inert. "Consciousness and matter appear as antagonistic forms of existence. Matter is necessity, consciousness is freedom, diametrically opposed to one another. Life is freedom inserting itself within necessity." The antithesis here is absolute; is indeed too absolute, for we must further "suppose that at particular moments and at particular points matter shows a certain elasticity, the opportunity for consciousness to instal itself."[1] *Mais le premier pas engage au second;* and this qualification at once undermines the whole dichotomy. Just as modern science can nowhere discover an inert and passive real, so philosophy fails to conceive one, for every element alike shares in the dynamic energy of the whole; and it is upon this truth that thought must base itself in its endeavour truly to relate necessity to freedom.

But further to account for this universal quality is impossible; it is, whether as dispersed among the elements or as cumulative in the whole, one of the ultimate—and therefore inexplicable—attributes of reality. It does not even explain the interaction of the

[1] *Mind-Energy*, p. 13. *Cf. Creative Evolution, passim.*

parts as corelevant and supplementary, for this interaction is itself nothing other than the activity of the whole regarded from one special point of view. Nevertheless it does enable us to obtain a deeper understanding of the nature of all complex individuality, and of the *logical results* of every advance in this complexity itself. For in the first place, since every element is thus indestructibly dynamic, its own specific activity must be introduced and continued into every combination of which it comes to form part: it would indeed be truer to say that all combinations arise and persist because of this unceasing activity of their constituents. The elements of any complex system, that is to say, never merely lie passively together, like grains of sand in a heap; they are incessantly united together reactively, like a good army by its inherent and unrelaxed discipline. And since further these elements not only combine, but also in combining supplement each other's characteristics, or, if we prefer somewhat metaphorical language, satisfy each other's affinities (though why this occurs is, ultimately, quite inexplicable),[1] combinations always tend towards stability, and in many cases, in which the number of their constituent parts is small, they actually achieve it.[2] The greater the complexity, therefore, of any such combination, the more abundant is its internal dynamism, and the more it partakes of the nature of the whole; and in so far as it is possible to express this fact quantitatively, we obtain the principle of the conservation of energy.

[1] The advance in knowledge often shows how it occurs, as in recent theories of molecular and atomic structure, or the reduction of certain vital processes to chemical and physical categories. But there is always a residual unexplained "why."

[2] Assuming the constancy of the originating conditions; which again means, however, determination by the whole.

It is obvious that determination—which means the relation between the whole (as such) and its elemental parts (again as such)—is always and throughout dynamic, never merely static; it implies influence, direction, control, action. At bottom every subordinate element or process is what it is because the whole is what it is; in other words, it is determined from without itself. This principle again has been given scientific form by Dr. Whitehead: "Each object is in some sense ingredient throughout nature. The doctrine is essentially interwoven in all modern physical speculation. An electric charge is everywhere. The modification of the electro-magnetic field at every point of space at each instant owing to the past history of each electron is another way of stating the same fact."[1]

This, however, does not preclude the appearance of a static aspect, for in every *stable* combination it is the dynamic action of the parts which itself results in the unchanging character of the whole—in the creation of a persistent individual system by an exquisitely balanced interplay of energy.

But the unconscious predilection of the mind in favour of the fixed or stable "thing," already referred to as having received an altogether undue prominence in Bergson's philosophy, has now a further weighty consequence; for it results in the abstraction of the static "thing" from the whole to which it actually belongs, owing to our indifference to the two sets of dynamic conditions which really constitute it what it is, viz. (*a*) the inherent activity of its own constituents, and (*b*) its reaction to the determining whole (or "environment"). That the static is only a subsidiary aspect of the dynamic is thus forgotten, and it becomes

[1] *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 145, 146.

elevated, therefore, to the position of an absolutely independent category. But such intellectual fetish-worship finds its nemesis in the failure to perceive, when due occasion arises, any kind of connection between "things" or "physical objects," thus regarded as static, and those systems or individuals which plainly exhibit to our observation both their internal dynamic activity and their continuous (although varying) reactions to the whole. It is inevitable, therefore, that these two essential characteristics must come to appear entirely new and inexplicable, simply because their previous *latent* existence had been disregarded: there appears to exist nothing analogous to them, nothing with which they can be related, and thus there arise what are supposed to be gaps in evolution, or even positive breaches of development, which are reflected in those contrasts drawn between inorganic and organic, living and non-living, conscious and unconscious, life and inert matter, vitalism and mechanism, physical necessity and spiritual freedom, and other similar antitheses with which, despite their falsity, science and philosophy abound.

But when, in contrast with this superficial view, the static is regarded as what it really is—only an aspect of an underlying dynamism, and every combination as an arena within which each element exerts its inherent activity, then (but only then) it becomes possible to perceive continuity running through all those infinite grades of complexity which characterise various individual systems. The fundamental point here is to regard all combination or organisation as not merely structural, but as predominantly dynamic; for from this principle it at once logically follows that every variation and every increase in complexity implies a

correlative change, again not only in the structure, but also both in the internal activity of the system and in its reactions to the environment; a change, however, which occurs with no break whatever in continuity, no mysterious transition from static to dynamic—no unexplained advent of directive agencies for which there exist no prior analogues.[1] The contrasts between organic and inorganic, between matter and mind, then become differences not of principle but merely of details—details which are, of course, extremely difficult to discover and relate, but which nowhere imply any hiatus, and which demand no absolutely discrepant grounds of explanation either in science or in philosophy.

Such a conception finds further support in the infinite diversity of the world; for if there were but little variety in the nature of the combining elements there could be but slight differences between the results of their co-operation, so that it would then become necessary to assume some special agencies other than and external to the associated elements themselves. But the marked contrasts between the specific activities of all these elemental factors imply a corresponding dissimilarity between the phenomena of their combination, to which all our present categories may still be applied but without assuming any breach of continuity.

The further implications of the continuous advance in complexity of organisation will be considered in the next chapter.

[1] Contrast the passage already quoted from Fichte—"not by transition, but by a leap, do we raise ourselves to rationality." Bergson's presentation again is only metaphorical—"for consciousness to instal itself it will have to humble itself at first" (*Mind-Energy*, p. 13). Figurative expressions of this kind are valuable when they elucidate facts which themselves are fairly definite, but they can never take the place of the facts.

XI

NECESSITY AND FREEDOM RECONCILED

2. The Logical Consequences of Advancing Complexity

From the basis of the two principles thus far established—(1) the universality of the dynamic, which includes all instances of the static as secondary aspects of itself, and (2) the almost infinite diversity of the elemental dynamic factors, as also of their simpler forms of combination—I shall endeavour to trace, in its bearing upon the categories of freedom and necessity, the logical results of the continuous advance in complexity of organisation.

This continuous advance, then, carries with it three fundamentally important consequences, which may be summarised by saying that systems and processes which appear first as "mechanical," or as "necessarily determined," gradually merge insensibly into those which are described as autonomous or "free," in such a way that the impressive contrasts between these modes of activity — instances of which have been already mentioned—become replaced by an uninterrupted transition from one to the other.

The first of these three conclusions bears upon the

relations and the reactions between systems and their environment. For to every system, whatever its specific character may be, each of its constituents contributes its own nature and activity; and it is by means of these that its relation with the environment is maintained. Obviously, therefore, every increase in the number of its constituents will render more complex the system's relations to all other systems; which means, in other terms, that both its susceptibility to external influences and its responses thereto must become increasingly intricate and delicate. If now we expand somewhat the detailed implications of this position, we find that those systems which are composed of relatively few elements will be capable of but few reactions; their total activities, in other words, will fall within only narrow limits, and their internal energy will readily be absorbed—as *e.g.* in the case of a "bound" electric charge—within the system itself. The inevitable outcome of all these conditions is that such a system acts and reacts as a stable, static, and apparently insensitive whole—it is, in short, a "mechanism." For that is, in essence, part of the meaning of this term: in calling any system "mechanical" it is these characteristics that are, in principle, always implied; and a "machine," in this connection, is only an artificial, as distinguished from a purely natural, mechanism. But with every degree of increasing complexity this mechanical level is gradually transcended, although at no point whatever can any rigid distinction be drawn. Invariable law continues to manifest itself, but the final phenomena become so intricate that its precise formulation becomes more and more difficult. It is this extreme intricacy and delicacy that are advanced by those who regard

Life as a category specifically distinct from all physical and chemical changes. "The phenomena of life," to employ Dr. Haldane's presentation of this view, "are such that no physical or chemical explanation of them is remotely conceivable. . . . Vitalism raises no objection to physical and chemical explanations applied outside the intimate vital processes of living organisms";[1] and the almost inconceivable delicacy of the characteristic responses which have been discovered by recent investigation is sufficiently illustrated by the automatic regulation of the acidity of the blood. This "is so accurate," asserts Dr. J. S. Huxley, "that an increase of one part of Hydrogen ion in a hundred million millions of blood is responded to by a change in the respiratory rate."[2] No more striking instance of that general relation between a change in internal constitution and the correlative change in responsive reaction, which I am here endeavouring to establish, could be desired. But at the same time this high sensitivity is not, as a matter of fact, a peculiarly vital characteristic; it is paralleled both by the phenomena of spectrum analysis and by the application of positive rays to chemical isolation;[3] and these latter phenomena, it is essential to notice as bearing upon the general position here, are purely "mechanical" and exactly calculable.

The second result which follows from increasing complexity—a result which is in a sense a corollary of the preceding—is that it will generally be much less difficult to ascertain exactly all the properties of systems containing few constituents than of those containing a large number, and less difficult, therefore, to predict

[1] *Mechanism, Life and Personality*, pp. 64, 22.
[2] *Science Progress*, October 1921, p. 241.
[3] Professor J. J. Thomson, *Rays of Positive Electricity*, Preface and p. 107.

the nature of their actions and reactions. The total range of possible variations is in the first instance more restricted, and stability is more quickly attained. To this principle the properties of radio-active substances, at the present stage of our exact knowledge of them, constitute no exception; indeed, in so far as we may speak of the "Life" of radium and its products, they furnish strong indirect support to my general argument. Thus invariable laws are more readily established; and from this aspect, again, the phenomena are "mechanical," static, physical—pertaining, as is usually said, to the sphere of necessity. But here again there is no absolute distinction between mechanical and vital, between necessity and freedom. For as the scientific Theory of Relativity has abundantly shown, new conceptions may profoundly modify even the most rigid of purely mechanical laws, while on the other hand the apparently simplest physical phenomena—as *e.g.* gravitation—may be the most difficult to explain.

Thus the unpredictable character of phenomena, and the difficulty of subsuming them under some general rule, constitute once more no argument in favour of the operation of any special agency which is different in its nature from that of the constituent factors; for both in processes usually called mechanical and in those excluded from this description the sole ultimate basis of distinction between what is predictable and what is not is found in the degree of the complexity of organisation;[1] so that, slightly modifying Dr. Bosanquet's mode of expression, we may say

[1] "The factors governing the velocity of enzyme action are shown more and more to be capable of a physical explanation" (*Science Progress*, January 1921, p. 433). Recent investigation supports the anticipation that all the organic products of plant metabolism will ere long be produced synthetically.

that " the realm of life is a huge world of development whose reactions are no less determinate than those of the mechanical world proper," and thus (with him) deny Driesch's assertion " that life cannot arise upon a constellation of known non-vital agents." [1] With the addition of every new constituent to such " non-vital " or mechanical systems there occurs a wider elasticity in the total range of their activities, which thus become less definite and therefore more difficult to predict; equilibrium becomes less stable and the free energy greater, thus permitting many and loose combinations which manifest themselves as increasingly delicate responses to environmental change.

But it is when we turn from the relations between any such systems and the environing world, to consider their *internal* processes and reactions, that the third and most important of the inferences from advancing complexity is brought to view. For this final conclusion enables us to ally necessity with freedom, and to include both, in spite of their apparently absolute opposition, in a common category, as being manifestations of one and the same universal principle acting under different sets of conditions. This ultimate principle is universal determination, which never ceases its action; and any theory of the nature of freedom which is based on the absence or the suspension of determination is fundamentally false. This seems to be the method pursued, *e.g.* by Bergson. " Life would be an impossibility," he maintains, " were the determinism of matter so absolute as to admit no

[1] *The Principle of Individuality*, pp. 368, 191. Dr. Bosanquet places the "world of development" within "the realm of life"—apparently as a portion or aspect of this; although this interpretation of his standpoint may be incorrect.

relaxation. . . . The slightest quantity of indetermination by continually adding to itself, will make up as much freedom as you like."[1] Again, "the more we realise the causal relation as one of necessary determination, we come to see that things do not exist as we do ourselves, and distinction between physical and psychical events becomes clear. We perceive that we, in ourselves, are centres of indetermination enjoying Freedom, and capable of creative activity."[2] Certainly Bergson's position here, as so often elsewhere, is somewhat indefinite, and the meaning of the fundamental term "indetermination" is not at all clear. But any such repudiation of determination, even of *necessary* determination, from the higher categories of Being postulates a totally unfounded distinction within the universe, and leads to a merely illusory and fictitious freedom which is on the same level—philosophically—as the noumenal freedom of Kant's ethical system.

Thus we must begin by maintaining that a true and real determination manifests itself continually and universally; and whether this is best called "necessity" or "freedom" depends entirely on the conditions under which it acts, or in more precise terms on the character of the individual system upon which and within which it operates. Stated in its briefest possible form, the principle I have advanced is that the more complex a system, the more "freely" does it act; and (conversely) the less complex it is, the more does it appear to be under the sway of "necessary law," or of "determination" in the ordinary but not altogether proper usage of the word. But though there is nowhere any real

[1] *Mind-Energy*, pp. 13, 14.

[2] Dr. J. A. Gunn, *Bergson and his Philosophy*, p. 82. As bearing on this question I may refer to Dr. Bosanquet's treatment in his *Logic*, vol. ii. p. 174, and *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 141.

interruption of continuity, and although an incipient freedom may be detected in the realm of Life and even in the more "material" world, still it is not until the evolution of a developed mind has occurred that true liberty comes fully into play.

Expressing this principle in still fuller detail, we find that advancing complexity, or the interconnection of increasingly heterogeneous parts, logically implies, in consonance with what has already been said as to the fundamental importance of dynamism, the augmented diversity of the dynamic interaction of these parts, together with a heightened differential response to external stimuli. *Every* element, then, is determined—primarily by the innate dynamic of its associated elements, and secondarily by the activity to which these are aroused by the environment; and, in addition, by the direct influence of the environment upon itself, which influence it, in its turn, transmits throughout the system. Thus its determination still originates, ultimately, from and within the Whole; but it finally reaches it, in part, by way of its containing complex system; and since this holds true to some extent of *every* included element alike, the result is that the system as a whole, to that degree, determines *itself*; and the more complex it becomes, the more it is thus *self*-determined. When, still further, the total organisation comes to include sub-systems which are themselves highly complex, the whole complicated internal dynamic, now capable of maintaining itself with some degree of independence, reaches a very high level; and though it can never persist in *complete* severance from the surrounding whole, still it thus attains the rank of a miniature "World," which to the degree that it is independent may properly be regarded

as "free," but which is more truly considered (again to that degree) as self-determined.[1]

This result may be alternatively expressed in terms of the relation between systems of increasing complexity and the Whole. The more complex a system becomes, the more of the Whole does it come to absorb and include within itself; or if we consider the strictly quantitative aspect of this growing absorption (although the quantitative is always subordinate to the qualitative) we may say that the system more and more encroaches on the self-determination of the Whole; and we may find a crude illustration of this in the steady rise of an able politician to power within the state. Here of course the "system" concerned is the personality at its highest level, as manifesting itself, that is, in influence and action, not the mere personage of the domestic hearth or the club. Considered qualitatively again, the organisation under consideration comes to assume more and more the concrete nature of the Whole, as the child, *e.g.*, becomes the man and the citizen; the more, in short, does the unceasingly active determination become centred and focussed within the given system itself. But the determination of the Whole is obviously *self*-determination in the widest conceivable sense; for there is no influence external to the Whole which can determine it; though at the same time this mode of expressing its nature is somewhat metaphorical, and does not imply either that the Whole is a closed and finished system, or that all its characteristics can ever be summed up quantitatively; it must rather be inter-

[1] "Everything, from an elementary substance upwards, reacts in the whole in which it is a member; life and mind do no less, but nothing more" (*The Principle of Individuality*, p. 194).

preted so far as possible in a qualitative sense. Therefore, once again, the more complex a system, the more does determination become a part or attribute of its internal economy—the more, that is, does it approach, though always asymptotically, that true self-determination which can be enjoyed in its purity only by the Whole.

From this general standpoint, then, the violent contrast between mechanism and freedom which receives so much emphasis in popular thought is seen to vanish, and to become transformed into a continuous transition from one of these polar categories to its opposite. To act freely means to persist in practical independence, if not indeed in defiance, of all external stimuli and influences—in other words, of all determination from without. But such independence is always apparent, never real; the slightest analysis proves that there is no actual escape from external determination—there is only a continuous exquisitely balanced and delicate response to it.[1] The emancipation, if it is regarded as absolute, is an illusion; it is analogous to the sinuous course of an Amœba, which only progresses by adapting itself to the outline of every obstacle it meets; or to the infinite tact of a man who achieves his purpose by means of unremitting calculation of the attitudes and reactions of all his fellows; and further, this is made possible only by the complicated yet perfectly adjusted internal organisation of the freely acting system. Too often this truth is altogether disregarded. Just as ancient thinkers despised "matter," and medieval religion repudiated "the flesh," exactly so does popular thought disdain the "merely mechanical."

[1] The changes in the constitution of the blood, already referred to, may be again cited; but the same refinement of response characterises all the secretory organs.

But, properly understood, the mechanical is absolutely indispensable to the successful working of all high grades of activity; it needs but to recall its place and increasing importance in modern civilisation to realise that everywhere alike it contributes exactitude, reliability, definiteness, to the infinitely complicated course of universal change. Such is the plain teaching of all the abstruse refinements of modern Physics, and of Mathematics also in so far as it illuminates and expands strictly physical theories themselves; of this no more striking instance could be conceived than the recent successful applications to experiment and to calculation of the Mathematics of Relativity. "The mathematical process of integration," asserts Dr. Campbell, "leads to physically significant results only because it corresponds step by step to some physical process"; [1] so that we may anticipate that ultimately differential equations will express everything, though they explain nothing. Similarly the biologist, in distinguishing between instinct and intelligence, finds part of his explanation in brain differences. "There is need for discrimination between the little-brain type and the big-brain type"; [2] or, in more general terms, "mind and individuality, so far as finite, find their fullest expression as aspects of very complex and precisely determined mechanical systems. . . . The mechanical appearance—the continuity of transition and determination—must therefore be unbroken." [3]

And as with Mechanism, so with Causation, which also, as being externally determinative, is generally regarded as antithetic and foreign to Freedom. But here once more the issue turns wholly upon the sim-

[1] *Physics, The Elements*, p. 422. [2] *The System of Animate Nature*, p. 520.
[3] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 146.

plicity, or the complexity, as the case may be, of the processes to which it is sought to apply the causal category. Wherever there exists a sequence — no matter how prolonged it may be—of changes each of which can be separately discerned, and so assigned its precise place and character within the entire series, there we can establish undeniable causal relations, all "necessarily" related to one another both for thought and in real existence.[1] Once more we are in the sphere of "necessity"—of "determination" in its popular but merely superficial meaning. But as the system or organism advances in complexity the difficulty of tracing exact causal relations increases—so rapidly indeed that it soon becomes practically impossible. But this by no means implies that causation has vanished, or has been supplanted by some transcendent super-causal agency. All that has occurred is that the system in question, merely in virtue of its dynamic complexity, firstly (as regards its own internal activities), now includes the causal sequences within itself instead of being included by them, so that its characteristic changes are predominantly self-caused as it were; and secondly (in relation to its environment), it continuously adapts itself by its responsive reactions, instead of passively transmitting onwards the influences that have affected it; so that to superficial observation the definite series of external causes appears to be suddenly broken off and absorbed as it were, since it now produces no visible and permanent changes in the system upon which it acts; the truth being, however, that the effect is masked or compensated by some internal reaction which is in itself quite as definitely and exactly determined as any

[1] J. S. Mill's denial of real causation has already been referred to, p. 93, *ante*.

in the physical world. The causal sequence, in short, still persists; but it has now become so tortuous and self-involved that specific "cause and effect" can no longer be indicated.

Nowhere, therefore, is there any possibility of escape from the sphere of determination. The concept of "indetermination," so far as it denies this principle, is altogether inadequate. There are only two conceivable alternatives. A system is either relatively simple, or even absolutely elemental,[1] in its constitution; it then has but the slightest capacity for reaction, and so forms part of a linear causal series, and is therefore determined predominantly, if not completely, from outside itself; it exists, that is, in the domain of "necessity." But even so tenuous a system as this may, simply by prolonging itself continuously, come to be regarded as in some sense self-dependent and self-sufficient. Thus Dr. Whitehead, in dealing with phenomena which are once again purely physical, affirms that "the stream of events which form the continuous series of situations of the electron is entirely self-determined . . . the progress of the stream of the situations of a scientific object can be determined by an analysis of the stream itself." [2] And this conception forms a transition to the second of our alternatives—to those systems which are really differentiated within themselves and therefore truly complex. Every advance in such complexity constitutes a movement away from pure external determination and towards internal or self determination, no matter how

[1] This is, however, exceptional. Even the electrons discharged during radio-active changes continue to form part of some wider physical system; still they may be isolated for purely theoretical purposes.

[2] *The Concept of Nature*, p. 159. The word "object" has for Dr. Whitehead a special significance which is not, however, foreign to its usual meaning. *Cf.* p. 158.

slight this may be in the first instance; and finally, since this growth in complexity is continuous, the transition to self-determination must be continuous also.

But just as a high degree of *external* determination forms the essence of what is meant by "mechanical," so a high level of *self*-determination constitutes "freedom." Freedom does not imply the absence of determination, for that is absolutely impossible; it implies determination by the self;[1] or more precisely, determination primarily and predominantly by the self, but never completely. For there is always present *some* degree of external determination, simply because there always exists an active environment; and absolute freedom therefore can pertain only to the Whole.

Thus that continuous advance in complexity and in its allied heterogeneity which has been shown to be an actual, if not indeed a logically necessary, character of the world is the indispensable basis of increasing self-determination or freedom; and freedom again is one of the most fundamental elements of the spiritual nature of man, and therefore of moral action and character. "The essence of all ethics," once again, "is shut up in Autonomy." The transition from mechanical necessity to freedom has thus been somewhat more definitely defined; both have been shown to be merely contrasting aspects of the one Reality;[2] but before the bearing of this principle upon the definitely ethical problem of moral obligation can be further pursued, it must be brought into proper

[1] "Self" is not used here as equivalent to person; it denotes any complex system of any kind. *Cf.* the succeeding chapter, on the function of consciousness and personality as such.

[2] *Cf.* Hegel, *Logic*, sec. 158. "This truth of necessity, therefore, is *Freedom*. . . . Necessity is transfigured into freedom concrete and positive. . . . Freedom presupposes necessity, and contains it as an unsubstantial element in itself."

relation with still another fundamental concept—the concept of Value. As preliminary to this subject, however, the effects of the evolution of consciousness upon the range of self-determination call for consideration, and will now be entered upon more specifically.

XII

CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Such then is the real nature of Freedom; and when we turn to its more specific character as it occurs within the world of actual experience, we find that it is enjoyed to any high degree only by individuals that are endowed with minds of a fairly advanced type. Continuity has already been so much insisted upon that any complete identification of freedom with mind, and mind alone, as excluding all materiality, is obviously impossible; still it is true in the main that below the level of personality, and (still more) prior to the appearance of consciousness, self-determination is extremely limited in its range, and indeed becomes impressive only through its contrast with the more absolute causal necessity of the material world. Plainly, therefore, consciousness, and in a yet greater degree mind, have rendered possible[1] an advance that is

[1] It would scarcely be accurate to say "caused" here, for at this stage any "cause" is a totality of an extremely large number of conditions; mind, *e.g.*, is merely a co-operating factor, allied with its own physical basis and with its whole material and psychical environment. *Cf.* "To combine systematic order with a possibility of development in various directions, determined by a self-conscious principle of choice within itself, is the prerogative of Mind or Reason" (Professor Webb, *Divine Personality and Human Life*, p. 193). But while this principle in itself is almost obvious, its explanation has always presented a serious, or indeed insuperable, difficulty. *Cf.* "The problem how man can be an agent, in tautological phrase, a free agent, is a real difficulty in psychology" (Wallace, *Lectures*, p. 80). I have already alluded to William James's adoption of a similar view.

unique in the level of freedom; so that the first question that arises here concerns the *modus operandi* of this progress; and in consonance with all that has been said already, any explanation that is offered must still be capable of being interpreted throughout strictly in terms of grades of complexity of organisation.

Our lack of a sound and accepted theory of the origin of consciousness is undoubtedly a serious defect at this point; nevertheless such facts as appear to be beyond dispute fortunately give added emphasis to that feature which has already been so prominent—*i.e.* complexity of organisation. For protoplasm, the material basis of life itself, is almost inconceivably complex; so is the organism, built up as it were from differentiated protoplasmic units; so again is the nervous system; and complex, pre-eminently, is the brain.

But, as has already been indicated, extreme complexity necessarily implies extreme sensitiveness; if consciousness is then viewed as being some form of activity or process,[1] rather than as itself a content, it may quite properly be regarded as one type of high sensitivity; and if, further, some type of philosophic Realism is adopted, there would appear to be no *prima facie* difficulty in supposing conscious sentience to be an attribute of certain extremely complex types of living matter. Certainly all this does not carry us very far; but, on the other hand, the presumed connection between nervous structure, already remarkably responsive to delicate physical stimuli, and the still higher type of conscious sensitivity, is by no means illogical; both types again rest upon one and the same basis of organised complexity. "The only possible

[1] Or again as the general relation between subject and object (or content) within experience.

course," says Dr. Bosanquet in his discussion of this difficult problem, "is simply to accept conscious process as the essence of a certain kind of physical process. Consciousness is a character of further increased sensitiveness and responsiveness. . . . Mind, so far as it can be in space, is nervous system; nervous system, focussed in the nisus towards unity, is finite mind."[1] "When the self appears," he continues, "it is granted by the Absolute as a solution to a definite situation in external arrangements. In the end this being granted by the Absolute upon a certain combination is all that any connection can mean."[2] So that if we avoid both philosophic subjectivism and dualism here, the contrast between mental and material processes does not present to theory an altogether insurmountable obstacle; and whatever be the true explanation of the genesis of consciousness, there is no dubiety as to its vast importance in its bearing upon the further development of freedom.

For in the preconscious material world the limits of its evolution are very quickly reached. Purely physical and chemical processes, although universal in their range, are relatively of a very simple order; while, on the other hand, the more complex vital phenomena are extremely limited in their duration and distribution. Here it will be recalled that it appears to be logically inevitable that all complex grades of organisation must be comparatively restricted and uncommon, and that they can only exist against a basis or background of lower values; but whether this is logically necessary or not, the actual fact is unquestionable.[3] These

[1] *The Principle of Individuality*, pp. 197, 219. *Cf.* the previous quotations on mind and environment.

[2] *Loc. cit.* pp. 190, 191. *Cf.* Lotze, *Metaphysic*, vol. ii. pp. 184-86.

[3] *Cf.* Chaps. VII. VIII. *ante.*

general conditions necessitate, therefore, that before the advent of consciousness, the widest possible range of activities falls within very narrow limits, and self-determination, the essential basis of which is high complexity, remains perforce at a low level; for the universality of any type is here counterbalanced by its simplicity, and so by "necessity," while complexity, on the other hand, involves a restricted temporal and spatial distribution. Similarly, though in another direction, the more complex the system, the fewer are the stimuli to which it will, as a whole and specifically, respond; once more, therefore, self-determination reaches another inexorable limit which cannot be transcended unless some new agency operates, which is capable of uniting complexity of organisation at once with wide distribution, frequency of occurrence, and an increasing responsiveness to transient and faint stimuli.

But no material system of any kind is competent to effect such a transition, for the highest potentiality of matter, as such, is fully expressed in vital processes. "Enregistration [in the brain] of capacities of effective routine makes for mastery of the usual, but it does not bring any gift of freedom. We distinguish the enregistering of instinctive capacity from the enregistering of intelligent capacity."[1] A developed consciousness, on the other hand, bringing to fruition a prolonged series of infinitesimal expansions, and thus preserving an unimpaired continuity, attains to so high a level of freedom—*i.e.* of self-determination—that an entirely new world seems to have been created; mechanical necessity, physical law, the direct sequence of effect upon cause, all appear therefore to have become inoperative.

[1] *The System of Animate Nature*, p. 520.

Such an interpretation as this of the facts of evolutionary change is indeed accepted, either literally or metaphorically, by various modern schools of thought. It is characteristic, as might indeed be anticipated, of Bergson's standpoint. "The principle of causality only tends to accentuate the difference between objects in a realm wherein regular succession may be observed or predicted, and a realm where it may not be observed or predicted, the realm of the self."[1] Similarly Professor Pringle-Pattison points out that Kant asserts that "self-determination makes us the subjects of another legislation, quite different from the natural."[2] Such a view, as I have endeavoured to show, is altogether illusory; nothing more has occurred here than a still further advance to the complexity of those systems which we distinguish as rational minds, conscious individuals, persons; and if this essential principle of their nature is grasped it becomes superfluous to trace in detail the intermediate stages of the evolution of all mental experience.

But while the fact of this connection between rationality and freedom has certainly been recognised, the essential *continuity* of such an advanced form of experience with all preceding stages seems to have been overlooked; it has been merely accepted *as* a fact—as isolated, and therefore to some degree inexplicable. "We proceed in Cosmology," Professor Pringle-Pattison continues with reference to Kant, "according to the regulative Idea of the World as an infinite series of necessary causation; but the *possibility* is still left open of the existence of a noumenal freedom alongside of the phenomenal determination,

[1] Dr. J. A. Gunn, *Bergson and his Philosophy*, p. 82. *Cf.* also *ante*, p. 112, note.
[2] *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 223.

should such a conception be imperatively demanded *on other grounds*." [1] Thus freedom is here reduced to nothing more than a postulate, a possibility, a category which is entirely disconnected from, or even opposed to, the processes of nature prior to the appearance of consciousness and mind.

If, however, we retrace the evolutionary course followed by all organisation as this becomes more intricate, it is obvious that in order to comprehend its full character the environment must be more and more taken into consideration; it becomes less and less possible to understand the organism purely in its isolation; system and environment steadily come into closer and closer relations until at last they become almost indistinguishable from one another.[2] This is of course only the logical result of the increasing heterogeneity, with its widening responsiveness to all external stimuli. The contrast therefore between the non-conscious world and the world within which mind is active, and also the manner in which the limits set by the former to self-determination are passed, will be best elucidated by the consideration of the vastly different rôles played in these two spheres respectively by the physical environment.

When, in the preconscious world, several stimuli of the same order [3] influence a system simultaneously, they frequently become compounded into a resultant stimulus, to which, and not to the stimuli as separate,

[1] *Loc. cit.* p. 227; italics mine. On p. 264 the "transition from a merely natural to a rational life" is termed "inconceivable"; but compare also p. 229, note.

[2] *Cf.* my previous quotation from Dr. Bosanquet: "You cannot say where self ends and environment begins." This is true, in a minor degree, of all systems lower than the self in rank; only the simplest of static bodies can be held in abstract isolation.

[3] By "order" is meant any distinct category of physical phenomena—light, gravitation, electricity, etc.

the system then responds; there is only the slightest possibility of discrimination, so that there occurs a concentration or summation of stimuli. For a developed intelligence, on the other hand, the environment acts, not thus as a summed-up totality, but in its true discrete individuality;[1] in other words, its various factors act as separate individuals instead of through a mere resultant. For this is the essential characteristic of consciousness. To perceive is to individualise; perception implies as many potential stimuli as there are different qualities in its world. Thus the absolute limits to which complexity rapidly approached in the preconscious sphere are altogether transcended. Instead of advanced complexity involving more restricted and specialised reactions, mind, although associated with individualities much more highly differentiated, at the same time raises to its maximum the number of possible stimuli. Higher complexity of mental organisation therefore becomes more and more compatible with an *increase* in the quantity or number of stimuli, instead of, as in the material world, their reduction and concentration; and when, further, qualities which are the same or almost the same are perceived repeatedly there occurs an unlimited increase in the *frequency* of stimuli also.[2]

Such is the character, in very general terms, of the mind-level attained in the animal world. Instinct and perception are highly developed, but there is as yet neither ideation, imagination, volition, nor reason in any proper sense of these terms; and still less

[1] I assume, as already indicated, a realistic epistemology. But even were the perceived world but "appearance," still there must be some correspondent differentiation among the "reals."

[2] *Cf.* further "The Genesis of Freedom of Will and Action," *Inter. Journal of Ethics*, vol. xxx. p. 231.

is there any moral consciousness or control. Such a world occupies, therefore, an anomalous position; compared with the material universe it appears to be free —to be self-determined, both as a whole and in each of its individuals; but relatively to the sphere of human society, on the other hand, it is the bond-slave of its passions and its appetites. There is here, of course, no real contradiction; it is merely that two different criteria are employed, so that the relation between the bodily and the mental organisation becomes reversed. The animal mind subserves the animal body, while in man the body is instrumental to the spirit; and once again the change is ultimately due to the continuous development of a psychological complex, which forms the basis of the organised heterogeneity of reason, deliberate choice and true volition—terms which in themselves are but abstract, and which must therefore acquire a specific form together with a concrete content before they can constitute a truly moral personality, or an experience dominated throughout by distinctively ethical ideals.

The faculty of perception, then, is the chief link between the human and the animal mind; and when from this basis there further arises the content of ideas and imagination, the limits which have previously restricted progress within its narrow bounds practically cease to exist. Objects now acquire meaning and symbolism—they become algebraical instead of simply arithmetical. For, as the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table tells us, "one of the many ways of classifying minds is under the heads of arithmetical and algebraical intellects. Every philosophical proposition has the general character of the expression $a+b=c$." And since a may stand for anything what-

ever, the most trivial fact may possess the weightiest significance; and thus the cognised environment acquires the highest conceivable grade of complexity.

But even this profound change in the nature of the ruling conditions does not in itself constitute any final explanation of the nature of freedom. To heighten complexity, and to increase the number and the frequency of stimuli, do not necessarily transform the determinism of the material world into spiritual freedom; even an infinite number of stimuli may still act purely mechanically. The other essential feature of the total situation that has thus arisen must be considered—the formation of that psychical content of ideas, images, memory, etc., which constitutes an essential part of the conscious individual or self.[1]

As this psychic content advances in its complexity, it comes to play a more and more prominent part in the total activities; and it does this *necessarily*—as the logical result of the conditions of the evolution of consciousness. For that increase in the number and the frequency of stimuli, to which attention has just been drawn, causes the inequalities of their separate effects upon the conscious individual to tend gradually towards a vanishing point. But when so large a number of influences, which thus become almost equal to one another, act simultaneously and separately, as they do in developed perception, any decisive and well-marked response on the part of the conscious subject must be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Exactly as in the physical world, although there an analogous

[1] The relation of the self, as such, to this content is of course a difficult problem, which does not, however, directly concern the issue here. All that we require is a "system"—an "individual."

state of things is altogether exceptional, such a set of conditions tends to produce more or less stable equilibrium—that is, the absence of any distinctively responsive activity. We may think, *e.g.*, of a tremulous magnetic needle in the centre of a constantly, but delicately, varying magnetic field — here no finally definite reaction is at all possible.[1] And to this we find a parallel in those constitutionally (or pathologically) vacillating persons who submit, like a drifting log, to all external stimuli, without manifesting any definite reaction of any kind.

Such cases, however, are exceptional; normally, definite response of some kind or another is an imperative necessity. To which, therefore, of all the innumerable external stimuli seeking to affect him the individual will finally respond must depend, not on these outer stimuli alone, but on the influence of that organised psychical content of memory, imagination and ideas [2] which the advance of consciousness has brought into operation. Even its action is at first—at the primitive levels of instinct, impulse and habit—almost purely automatic or mechanical; none the less it is, just as in the still lower realm of purely vital changes, a rudimentary type of true self-determination. But with the advance to developed reflection and deliberation, the conscious choice of stimuli which are selected, in the light of their relations to the ruling systems of psychic content, from among the total which confronts attention, more and more replaces the originally mechanical mass-action, and the individual gains, therefore, an increasing freedom from purely external

[1] Another illustration is afforded by the fluctuations of many scientific recording instruments.

[2] These terms have here a very general significance, not their technical psychological meaning.

determination by means of this growth of an inner determination.

This reflective comparison and selection of stimuli is what is meant by "reason"—"rationality"—in its bearing upon action; although of course this must not be understood to mean that reason can ever be absolutely divorced from activity; for reason is essentially dynamic, not static. It may be contended, however, that the final result is still only the effect of the "strongest" psychical combination, exactly as was the case when action was dominated by pure impulse or instinct; and that, since necessity still rules, freedom is therefore only an illusion. Here the facts are undoubtedly true; but to hold that freedom is therefore negated is fundamentally to misread the significance of the whole situation and to misapprehend the real character of freedom itself. Necessity still reigns, certainly; but it is an entirely new type—a hitherto unattained level—of necessity; it is an *inner* necessity, operating *within* the individual and constituting *his own* essential being—the necessity of a rational agent, impelling him first to seek, and then to obey, the law of his own rational nature.

For the force of the "strongest" determining factor is now no longer patent and unmistakable, as it was in the case of pure impulses or desires. The "strongest" motive is here the most rational; but which, among all the different influences acting on the mind, this is, can be discovered only by the deliberative activity of the agent himself. Except in the relatively few cases where one, and only one, course is rationally possible, we have again the simultaneous operation of a large number of almost equally powerful stimuli, which are now, however, internal instead of external;

once more, therefore, there can be no definite result until an internal deciding factor is evolved.[1] But this is what is meant, essentially, by deliberation—reflection —reason—which proceeds in obedience to its own laws—the "laws of thought." Thus reason is subject to necessity, and is therefore determined; but it is at the same time *self*-determined, and therefore free.

The true character of this freedom, however, must not be misunderstood. It is never freedom *from* stimuli; for that would be magic or miracle, or their modern philosophic equivalent, "indeterminism." It is, when truly apprehended, freedom *within* stimuli. It is never an escape from *all* determination, but the selection, by the individual himself, of *his own* inner determinants; and thus true *self*-determination—not (again) *in*determination—attains its highest level and fullest activity.

The issue depends ultimately, therefore, not on the presence or absence—on the reality or unreality—of determination in itself, but rather on the character of the operative factors which produce it. From the dawn of perception to the highest spiritual levels we may trace the conscious subject becoming continuously more and more a real agent in determining the resultant action. In other words, that determination which always exists—and which is, in fact, positively necessary—gradually acquires a totally new basis and character. It becomes less and less determination from without, and more and more determination from within, the individual himself. Thus we finally confront "a necessary act, but not a necessary agent, because nothing but the agent determines the act, and there is no meaning in applying to him any 'must,'

[1] This itself, of course, may be aroused by some additional external factor.

except in the sense that everything is what it is."[1] There occurs, that is to say, a slow but fundamental transposition of the parts played and of the influence exerted by the environment (both physical and psychical), and by the conscious subject respectively. At the end of the long evolutionary process the individual has become predominantly directive of himself, and the environment, though still an indispensable factor, is of but secondary importance.[2]

This then is the ideal goal to which all spiritual progress leads, and which it can achieve only by means of the continuous further organisation of the newly acquired mental content under the higher intellectual categories. This organised mind content again, because it has originated in intimate connection with the earlier non-rational and predominantly active types of experience, cannot but most profoundly influence all future action, which is thus brought by gradual stages under the control of thought and ideas; and these again slowly generate their own dominating ideals and principles.[3]

[1] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 355.

[2] A social parallel may be observed in the gradual transposition of political power, as autocracy gives place to democracy.

[3] It is fundamentally important to bear in mind the complex nature of this psychological content at even its highest level: "Though the control of primitive impulse becomes more and more complex it is always a control by that which draws its controlling force ultimately from primitive impulses" (Dr. Drever, *Instinct in Man*, p. 151). On the conflicting interpretation of this complexity *cf.* Professor Graham Wallas, *The Great Society*, chap. iii.

XIII

DESIRE, REASON AND VALUE

Thus the evolution of consciousness, as such, inevitably results in a far-reaching expansion of the range of organic self-determination. But a still further advance becomes necessary before the true sphere of distinctively moral experience and ethical speculation is attained. Consciousness itself must rise above its first primitive level and become self-organised into more definite modes of intelligence and will. The exact details of this long development form the subject-matter of psychology, and to ethics they are of interest only indirectly; although here, as in all scientific investigation, accuracy and truth are of the first importance.

Nevertheless, it is at this point that there emerge some of the most crucial difficulties of our whole enquiry. These difficulties have arisen and still persist, it appears to me, very largely because ethics has always treated its specific subject-matter—no doubt unconsciously and inevitably—from a wholly inadequate standpoint—has approached it, as it were, from the wrong end; its entire orientation, therefore, has for this reason been more or less distorted, and its conclusions thus deprived of their due assurance from the

outset.[1] The investigation of the moral experience, with all its obscure phenomena and intricate problems, has hitherto proceeded too much from the point of view of the forcible *contrast* which it presents with all the lower levels of existence, and too little with regard to its essential *continuity* with these. Much has undoubtedly been gained here by the adoption of both the evolutionary and the comparative methods; but these have been applied in the main only within the ethical (or at most the quasi-ethical) sphere itself, and the true significance of the continuity thus ascertained has hardly been properly grasped. On the contrary, so far as it has been pressed into the service of naturalistic ethics, it has been wholly misinterpreted; for it has there been taken to mean, not that Nature contributes both an indispensable basis and an uninterrupted influence to moral experience, but rather that ethical principles must be entirely derived from, or reduced to, nothing more than natural law;[2] so that not only do we find natural law in the spiritual world, but we never find anything else there. Such a mode of argument, however, is as defective as the analogous tendency to degrade all thought to some basis in association or even in sensation. On the other hand, whenever this continuity is lost sight of, the moral realm appears, as a *deus ex machina*, to descend upon the natural world rather than to arise from it; and then so great is their difference that all our emphasis is inevitably laid on their opposition and conflict, both as regards the outer world and the inner life; thus we obtain the formidable trinity of the catechism—the

[1] *Cf.* Preface.

[2] If we give a wide meaning to the words "natural object," Dr. G. E. Moore's description of naturalistic ethics may be adopted—"The supposition that good can be defined by reference to a *natural object*" (*Principia Ethica*, p. 39).

world, the flesh and the devil. Human nature becomes the battlefield of impulse and reason; and though such an attitude is not without its sadly ample justification, still it can offer no solution whatever of our theoretical difficulties. Even ethical theory itself adopts in the main this faulty method of approach. "The mark of a rational being," says Professor Pringle-Pattison in his exposition of Kant, "is that it is raised above the government of a succession of impulses."[1] Here again there appears an over-emphasis of the contrast, or even the opposition, between reason and impulse; they are simply brought into apposition, with no hint of any community of origin. That unbroken continuity of development from one to the other which is the only concept that can give reason (as also morality) its proper setting in the universe seems to be completely ignored; and moral theory would gain appreciably in clearness merely by the inversion of the above statement —if we say, *i.e.*, that the development (due very largely in the first place to "impulse" itself) of a controlling and directing mental content is what comes in the end to constitute "reason." In this way the essential continuity is maintained unimpaired, and the two spheres assume their proper relation to each other as diverse levels in one unbroken course of change.

It is only from this point of view, then, that we may go on to assert that "a science of ethics which does not assume as its basis the self-determination of the rational being remains outside of moral experience altogether. Moral experience consists entirely in this self-reference."[2] This assumption, *i.e.*, must not be

[1] *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 223.

[2] *Loc. cit.* p. 321. *Cf.* "only a rational being has a will" (Professor Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, p. 317).

a mere assumption dogmatically formulated simply because we cannot proceed without it; it is legitimate only if ethics—adopting in its scientific aspect the methodology of all science as such—accepts as its own special assumption a principle that finds unquestionable foundation elsewhere, whether within some other science or merely in practical experience. Here its principle is that rationality forms the basis of that self-determination which constitutes the highest level of the advancing development that is continuous throughout the whole of Being. Apart from such continuity, reason cannot but appear as isolated—and therefore as inexplicable; and then its characteristic issue in a higher self-determination, the indispensable basis of ethics, must fall within some realm separate from the rest of the universe; and however we may describe this sundered sphere—as noumenal or ideal or spiritual—its isolation in this manner inevitably constitutes in the end a difficulty that proves insuperable for all types of ethical theory.

This leads us to a still more fundamental aspect of our entire enquiry, to which all that has preceded is but anticipatory. For there still remains for consideration the distinctively ethical problem of the relation between abstract rationality [1] and conduct—of the mode in which an experience thus controlled by reason becomes "moral" experience in the true sense of that term. In other words, if (as is generally accepted) rationality furnishes the basis, what is the nature of the superstructure? Since reason and morality are inseparably connected, wherein consists their essential distinction?

[1] By which is meant rationality, as such, isolated from its occurrence in concrete experience, for purposes of pure theory; bare rationality in itself, *i.e.*, has no real existence.

On this fundamental point the passage already quoted from Professor Pringle-Pattison appears to be somewhat ambiguous. "The self-determination of the *rational* being" constitutes (to begin with) the basis of ethics; but now further, "*moral* experience consists entirely in this self-reference."[1] To the same effect John Caird has presented Spinoza's moral philosophy: "there is . . . one doctrine which seems to imply, not simply the correspondence, but the absolute identification of the intellectual and the moral life. Spinoza would seem to reduce the whole content of man's spiritual life to thought or intelligence and its manifestations."[2] Confining ourselves, however, to Professor Pringle-Pattison, to say that (theoretically) moral experience consists entirely in the self-reference of a moral being would be, obviously, a mere tautology; but on the other hand it seems impossible to hold that the self-reference of a rational being, specifically and purely *as* rational, suffices of itself to constitute true moral experience. For we may imagine a purely intellectual experience — say *e.g.* a mathematician engaged with strictly abstract theory and refusing to concern himself with any practical applications of any kind — an experience which would be, essentially, "the self-determination of the rational being"; and such an experience could only be regarded as moral after the introduction of considerations other than the purely intellectual categories themselves. Nor is it sufficient to say that such an experience never actually occurs; for this is but to say that rationality is always

[1] *Cf.* note 2, p. 136, *ante*. Throughout this whole passage there seems to be no distinction between the rational and the ethical consciousness; or if there is such a distinction, then its basis and character are not exhibited.

[2] *Spinoza*, pp. 240, 243. Caird proceeds to consider the necessary qualifications of this principle in Spinoza.

associated with moral factors, again, however—and this is the essential point—without expressing the nature of the distinction between these two categories.[1] Nor, again, is it true to say that rationality is passive, while moral experience implies activity; for intelligence, however abstract and theoretical it may be, is also essentially active. The self-reference (or self-determination) of the rational being in itself, then, is altogether inadequate (if the terms are interpreted with due precision) to constitute truly moral experience. Some further elements or aspects still remain to be ascertained; and it is at this stage that the fundamental concept of value must be considered.

It is obvious that during the course of evolution reason has supervened upon a highly organised complex of internal and external activities, many of which were in themselves so powerful that only their mutual opposition enabled reason, whose principle of action may be summed up as *divide et impera*, to obtain any measure of control over them; and rationality, having thus originated in the most intimate connection with action, maintains its relation thereto throughout the whole later course of actual experience. The experiential content upon which it operates is the total complex of the ends of action and the means thereto —of purpose and its achievement. But such a mode of describing this interconnection is obviously the result of external observation and of reflective thought, and expresses, therefore, the objective point of view. As the phenomena first present themselves to the limited self-consciousness of the experient, however—

[1] This applies equally to the opinion that purely intellectual activity of this kind is, in its divorce from practical affairs, to some degree morally wrong. Quite apart from the value of the results, exterior considerations are again brought in.

i.e. from the subjective standpoint — this primary material, which the later processes of thought must organise, takes the form of consciously and directly felt desires and satisfactions; and it is from this primitive level that there is ultimately developed the protean modes of the concept of value.

A brief digression at this point on subjectivity and objectivity may make the future course of the discussion clearer. Since these two categories are (in a sense) but aspects of one and the same concrete experience, they can never be separated from each other; nevertheless their distinction is essential. To say, therefore, that certain phenomena are subjective, or to describe a situation in subjective terms or from the subjective standpoint, means that these are considered predominantly, but never exclusively (for this is plainly impossible) in their relations to the subject and to his experience, so that whatever further relations or connections there may be become secondary and subordinate to these; while the objective standpoint, on the other hand, implies that relations to the subject's experience are subsidiary to those which subsist within reality external to or beyond this. The application of these terms, therefore, is altogether a matter of selection, emphasis, orientation; it depends on where the line is drawn, by himself or by others, between the experiencing subject and the rest of reality; and to a thoroughly consistent subjectivist, should such exist, only one category is ultimately legitimate. But whatever the final outcome may be, it remains true that " the origin of knowledge is experience. . . . It is with experience—and his own experience—that the philosopher must start. The results of his analysis of experience will run, like a dominant theme in a

symphony, throughout the structure which he subsequently erects." If to this we add that the philosopher, in starting with "his own experience," is not thereby committed to subjectivism—if we accept the position that experience always reveals a content which is itself objective—we are protected, in advance, from adverse epistemological criticism.[1]

Returning now to the question of the origin of the idea of value, we find that the subject is of fundamental importance for ethical theory. It may almost be said, indeed, that its entire problem centres in the transcendence of the primal and ever present subjectivity wherein the roots of value lie; or in the investigation and substantiation of the nature of true objectivity in the first place, and in its bearing on subjectivity in the second.[2] The truth of this contention has already appeared, I believe, in the case of determination, freedom and necessity; for the difficulties which attend the subjective presentation of these problems disappear to some extent when they are considered from the objective standpoint; and this is still more the case with regard to value and moral obligation.

Thus the primitive consciousness (to be distinguished, of course, from the later developed explicit concept) of value arises upon the basis of the satisfaction of individual desires. That has value in the first instance which is capable—it may be under conditions themselves complicated—of satisfying desire. It is inevitable, therefore, that the confusion and conflict between desires themselves extend to the associated

[1] C. A. Richardson, *Spiritual Pluralism*, p. xiv, abridged. *Cf.* also on this crucial issue in the whole theory of knowledge what has already been said at the beginning of Chap. V.; and further Wallace, *Prolegomena*, pp. 210, 211.

[2] *Cf.* the very suggestive titles of Dr. Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures—*The Principle of Individuality and Value*; and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual.*

values, so that the rationalising of gratifications and the means thereof very soon takes the general form of the gradation of values.[1]

The germ of such a development may perhaps be traced back even to the operation of reason among the higher animals, while its further advance may have been due to the physical weakness of primitive man and the rude devices which alone enabled him to survive. To a degree far greater than before, then, must satisfactions have become systematised, subordinated one to another in an organised scheme whose general form gradually acquired some measure of permanence; but this estimation of values still remained in terms of the subject's own keen and vivid suffering and pleasure, even when they came to comprise his family and tribe.

It is from some such intermediate stage as this that moral theory, as distinct from psychology, must begin its explicit consideration of value. For this original form—this interpretation (in itself natural and inevitable) of value in subjective terms of pain and pleasure, want and gratification—persists without any essential change for a very long time. But the influence of two powerful factors, in themselves of the utmost importance, tends to mask this permanence of the earliest type of value judgement; these are the advancing rationalisation, and the consequent refinement, of desires and satisfactions; and it is easy to confuse the first of these (if not indeed the second also) with the development of morality itself.[2] But neither the sub-

[1] In the main because satisfactions are particular, which as "value" more easily assume a general form.

[2] We may compare, but without pressing it too literally, Professor Pringle-Pattison's assertion (already quoted) that "moral experience consists entirely in this self-reference of the rational being."

ordination of proximate to ultimate satisfactions, nor the substitution of æsthetic and intellectual pleasures for material, nor even the merging of purely individual gratification within some more inclusive and widespread happiness, suffices in itself to constitute—though it may approximate towards, and become an element in—*morally* good character and conduct, so long as these retain the form, and are expressed in terms, of the satisfaction of desires; so long, *i.e.*, as desire and satisfaction, *as such*, remain the sole or the principal criterion of the moral character of objects and activities. "For it makes no real difference in the motives of action. The only motives are the natural inclinations which man shares with the animal creation. Reason contributes nothing except the power of conceiving their objects in the abstract and of ordering details so as to secure a maximum of satisfaction in them."[1]

But this position must not be misunderstood as implying the exclusion of desire altogether from considerations of theory; on the contrary, desire must always be retained as an element in goodness and value, only not as a *criterial* element—not as itself a criterion, or at least not an ultimate criterion. Desire for the good is, obviously, a good desire; not, however, because desire is what it is, but because good is what it is; and the nature of the good still remains to be elucidated. "To say that a man must make the Good the content of his will, raises the question, what that content is, and what are the means of ascertaining what good is."[2] The good (again obviously) satisfies; but it satisfies only a desire for good, and so remains its own criterion.

[1] *Life of Edward Caird*, p. 308.
[2] Hegel, *Logic*, sec. 54.

In other words, a morally good character must contain, as one of its essential elements, the desire for good; not, however, because desire in itself is ever a sufficient justification, but because it is an inexpugnable factor in human nature.

It is indeed the advancing rationalisation of desire that itself brings to light its inherent defectiveness as the true standard of value. Even were the problem not forced upon it by the crises of life, still the universality of reason must pass beyond the narrow bounds of merely subjective interests to consider the questions of the real nature of value, of its ultimate source and of its most permanent forms; and then it becomes plain that the very strength and persistence of desire are wholly misleading. For the rationalising of desire results—and this quite apart from any points of theory—in its refinement; *i.e.* (partially) in the repression of originally powerful, and the strengthening of originally weak desires; so that, as any decisive standard, desire comes in practice to refute itself. And thus the two final phases of our enquiry are brought into view:—(1) the determination of an ultimate criterion of value, apart from mere satisfaction; and (2) the bearing of this principle of value-judgement upon experience in its relations to conduct and character.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XIII. ON DESIRE AND REASON

The status of desire within the whole of experience is an all-important subject, although at the same time its details concern Psychology rather than Ethics itself. I believe that the brief analysis accorded to the matter here is in agreement with the views of other ethical theorists. I am glad to find that Mr. Bradley's later position is (in my opinion) identical with mine. "I do not think that desire should be included in the definition" of the good. "Desire will supervene, but it is

wrong to take it as being from the first essential." [1] This is the more significant because the writer has altered his earlier conclusion.

By Hegel desire is graded very low in the experiential scale. "The lowest mode of apprehension, and that least appropriate to the mind, is purely sensuous apprehension. The mind is impelled in a correspondingly sensuous form to realise itself in things, and relates itself to them as *desire*. In this appetitive relation a man does not open his mind with general ideas as a thinking being, but has relations dictated by particular impulses and interests"; and "Art excludes desire." [2]

Professor Hobhouse's recent able analysis of the connection between impulse desire and will seems to me to follow the same general tendency. Desire is "Impulse directed towards an anticipated end. . . . In desire there is precisely the same impulse-feeling that we find in impulsive action proper. . . . Volition introduces unity of direction into desire, as desire introduced unity into the lower impulses. . . . Action rests on impulse-feeling. . . . But impulse-feeling is completely transformed by a development within (which) we must look for the practical Reason." [3]

As with desire, so with satisfaction. "Desirable and desired are not convertible terms"; [4] but only a long process of rationalisation, with its attendant refinement, is competent to discover this principle. Finally, it may be shown in its connection with subjectivity and objectivity by a quotation from Dr. Bosanquet. "The common objective basis may be called the quality of satisfactoriness, the character which logically and in every form of experience gives necessary satisfaction; not mere actual satisfaction of a sentient being. Satisfactoriness is objective and satisfaction subjective." [5]

[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 2, note 1.
[2] *Introduction to the Philosophy of Fine Art*, p. 104.
[3] *The Rational Good*, pp. 44, 45, 51.
[4] E. Albee, *History of English Utilitarianism*, p. 315.
[5] *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 96.

XIV

THE OBJECTIVITY OF VALUE

Although desire and satisfaction thus show themselves altogether inadequate as *ultimate* criteria of value, they are none the less competent to express one aspect of the ultimate criterion; and it is from them that thought must derive the first indication of the solution of its problem. For there always exists the possibility —indeed virtually the necessity—of some direct connection between every actual satisfaction and true value; and just as value is at first experienced in and through some mode of gratification, so it is conceivable that every form of value without exception will in some way or other satisfy. But this principle only holds true under certain quite definite conditions whose elucidation constitutes part of the whole enquiry; it cannot be laid down in advance as true, except pragmatically as a characteristic of actual experience. Nevertheless this persistent connection between value and satisfaction determines at least the formal character of the final solution; for it necessitates that this takes the direction never of the mere negation of desire, but rather of its transcendence.

What, then, is meant by such a theoretical transcendence of desire? It means that those complex conditions which underlie and determine want and

its gratification must be reinterpreted by thought. Hitherto these conditions have been taken merely in their own concrete nature, and then generalised in terms of value. But they must now be considered from quite another standpoint—they must be understood not merely as what they actually are in themselves, but further in their profounder objective implications. And from such an essentially objective point of view desire is seen to imply always some incompleteness, and satisfaction (on the other hand) its removal; and in correspondence with this, value —again as objective—takes the general form of the power or capacity to confer some measure of realisation and completion. It is true that this general intellective conception may prove to be unattainable by the individual who is most directly concerned, dominated as he may be by some transient but all-powerful impulse; but it is none the less the aspect which the theoretical situation presents to reflection.

For the individual, in his close attachment to his primal subjective standpoint, must regard his world in its relations to himself alone; everything thus becomes subservient to the gratification of his desire, which is, *as* desire, its own all-sufficient justification, to the exclusion of all other considerations whatever. But by the reflective observer, who takes an unimpassioned external survey of the situation, desire must be related to the subject's whole nature; and then it obviously indicates some lack or imperfection, which, however, may or may not be a defect that ought to be remedied. Here "to aim at impartiality is to aim at objectivity." [1] Thus there arise two distinct, and possibly diametrically opposed, standards of reference; but the mere

[1] Dean Rashdall, *Is Conscience an Emotion?* p. 108.

possibility of their conflict in itself necessitates that one of them shall be accepted as (in principle) predominant. For, as in all such cases of contradiction, the final solution must be expressed in some general principle which is based upon all the intrinsic conditions of the situation, not merely upon any extrinsic circumstances. These two divergent reference standards, therefore—the subjective and the objective—base themselves on two totally different methods of interpreting the same group of phenomena—two methods which may be distinguished as particular and general —limited and universal—superficial and profound. The first standard is desire, recognising no criterion except its own satisfaction, so that even the conflict of desires is settled on no other principle than the strength of desire itself; and from any such standpoint value comes to mean nothing but the power to satisfy those needs which have attained supremacy only after long and bitter internecine struggle. "The driving force in desire is the tone of present feeling attached to an idea."[1]

While desire maintains this absolute character, the second reference standard cannot but contradict it. For every standard, of itself and as such, is absolute; it is in principle a final basis of reference, which can become relative only when it has been superseded by some more inclusive criterion in which its own finality has been absorbed. "The *a priori* character of an intuition depends on the distinctness of the whole which is its foundation, together with comprehensiveness. It is subordinated by the subordination of that whole to a wider or more truly real one."[2] Conflict

[1] Professor Hobhouse, *The Rational Good*, p. 44, note.

[2] Dr. Bosanquet, *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 16. The *a priori* has always a degree of absoluteness.

between the two standards, therefore, ceases only when desire, as the result of its gradual rationalisation, loses its original absoluteness; in this way satisfaction becomes associated more and more with factors altogether different from itself, such as the general conditions which confer upon it stability and persistence. Every such general objective combination furnishes in the end a practical criterion of value, so that we learn by slow degrees to accord the highest values to those objects and situations which are capable of yielding us the stablest modes of satisfaction; and here the very insatiability of desire has the advantage that it ensures in the long run a widely extended and definite organisation of permanent satisfactions, which again reflects itself in a highly systematised scale of values.

But just as multitudinous desires indicate, *prima facie*, wide and deep-seated defectiveness, so the systematic group of values which afford satisfaction to these comes to be interpreted not so much in the primitive terms of subjective gratification as of the later basis of objective completeness; and when this occurs the whole experiential situation becomes transformed owing to the introduction of a new type of criterion of value. For the standard of what constitutes completion is always essentially objective, although it originates, like all concepts, from experience which itself is subjective; even those individuals who accept only their own estimate of their perfection must adopt a standard which is beyond themselves; so that their subjective judgement in such cases concerns not so much this standard itself as the degree of their attainment. In this manner the primary connection between satisfaction and value becomes gradually weaker, until finally value is recognised and accorded

quite apart from any actual satisfaction; as when we say that something has value, although it has none for us; even though, indeed, to ourselves it may be positively distasteful. "The point is to lay open the basis of satisfaction to criticism. A man may be satisfied when he is drunk; but his satisfaction is not satisfactory."[1]

It is some such development of the concept of value as has here been very briefly outlined that is meant by the "transcendence of satisfaction and desire"; and only such a development can lead to those stages of experience that are properly to be called "moral." Our primitive criteria are then partially or altogether discarded in favour of completeness, satisfactoriness or perfection with its essentially objective standards; so that in the end we come to recognise that what has value may, or should, satisfy us, rather than insist that only what satisfies us can have any value. But at this point an important theoretical difficulty arises. For it may be contended that we still remain within the sphere of subjectivity, inasmuch as our concept of completeness is itself subjective. To this the reply is that any argument which takes this form simply confuses the subjectivity of the concept, in so far as it arises and exists within some mind or other, with the objectivity of thought, and of the real entity itself; it thus fundamentally misinterprets the nature both of the mind and of reality, and therefore of their mutual relation. For the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, essential though it is, never implies (as has been pointed out already) any *separation* of reality from thought; it is entirely a matter of emphasis or aspect.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 96. Adequate criticism (of course in the Kantian sense) further proves this basis to be ultimately objective; *cf.* Chap. XVII., below.

The activity of the thinking individual, being a mode of mental process, is certainly subjective; but none the less the nature of thought in itself, as of the correspondent reality, is essentially objective; and in this sense, therefore, the criterion of completeness is an objective criterion. "Without objectivity Ethic has no meaning." [1]

In itself, of course, this is by no means a new difficulty, while to deal with it in all its intricacies would require a lengthy discussion of the theory of knowledge. But it has been given such a degree of prominence by a recent writer, in its bearing upon the nature of the general will and of the state, that it deserves fuller consideration by way of digression. "The fallacy in the Hegelian theory," maintains Professor Hobhouse,[2] "consists in identifying the system of our thought with the reality to which it refers. The system of our thought is not identical with the system of reality, except in the sense that our thought itself is an event, but has reference to that reality, and reality itself is not finally intelligible until we take the relation between it and thought into account by a more comprehensive thought. . . . The classificatory system has within our thought a unity. . . . But the objects to which the system applies may be scattered through the universe and devoid of all the interconnecting threads that make an individual whole. This is the fallacy involved in the Hegelian doctrine of the concrete universal. It attributes the unity which belongs to the concept as contained in the act of thinking to the mass of objects to which the concept refers."

[1] Hartmann, *Das sittliche Bewusstsein*, p. 92.
[2] *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, pp. 65-70.

If this criticism is valid it is obvious that we can have no certainty whatever that the concept of perfection or completeness has anything more than subjective validity—possesses anything higher than "within our thought a unity, even an individuality"; even if it be a universal for our thought, that need not imply that objective satisfactoriness really exists. This contention, of course, is familiar enough; but the arguments which Professor Hobhouse has recently advanced in its support appear to me to imply very remarkable consequences. "The objects," he maintains, "to which the (thought) system applies may be scattered through the universe and devoid of all the interconnecting threads that make an individual whole." It is surely difficult to imagine such a view being seriously put forward. Is it at all possible to envisage the world, in the light of the content and the continuous advance of modern knowledge, as being anywhere "devoid of all the interconnecting threads that make an individual whole"? Is not any such idea an echo from the days of thought's infancy, when Nature was not even a mystery, but only an enigma? That the world, wherever we investigate it, is transfused throughout by "interconnecting threads" constitutes at once the comprehensive judgement and the basal postulate of science, or even, from any profound standpoint, of history also; universal law in thought must be based on universal connection in reality. How else can it be called a "universe"? It is certainly true that, so far as our concepts are classificatory, their content is obtained by abstraction; and if thought systems were never other than classifications, Professor Hobhouse's argument, that to attribute "the unity which belongs to the concept to the objects to which

the concept refers " is fallacious, would be irrefutable. But it has been pointed out repeatedly that classification is only one phase, and by no means the highest phase, of thought's activity, and further that classes are but abstract, and never concrete universals. Classification is only the first loose transliteration of the baffling hieroglyphs of reality, the merely superficial ordering by the mind of its involved and tangled content; and even so it is at all possible only because its resultant groups and systems rest on an underlying unity to which it constantly endeavours to conform itself, as the rapid changes in all our classifications themselves abundantly witness. Dr. Bosanquet, at whose treatment of the state and of the will Professor Hobhouse's criticisms are directed, has himself stated this as categorically as possible: " When we come to the point where Logic deals with the universal in its true form, we leave the preconception of class behind us for good and all. . . . No judgement, strictly speaking, expresses by its form a class-predication at all." [1]

Professor Hobhouse's position here, in short, seems to result from a radical misinterpretation of Hegel's central principle, and can be accepted only if we give to the terms "thought" and "reality" an unjustifiably narrow meaning. So far as Hegel does identify "the system of thought" with "the reality to which it refers," he means both the entire system of thought, and the whole of reality; not any limited number of concepts whose "thinking is an individual act," nor any objects as distinguished from the world within which they exist. " If they are facts they are at least not ultimate and independent. They do not exist in

[1] *Logic* (2nd edition), vol. i. p. 60; vol. ii. pp. 256, 257.

isolation and solid singleness—little islands of Being in a sea of Nothing—but are items in a more comprehensive fact, or moments in a continuous process." [1] This Hegelian identity of Reality and Thought is certainly Ideal. As Caird has expressed it, "the ideal of knowledge would be that the object should be one with the self that knows it"; [2] or to quote Hegel himself, "in the nature of existence . . . consists logical necessity in general. This alone is what is rational, the rhythm of the organic whole. This alone is the sphere of speculative thought"; [3] and from any lower standpoint, whatever we choose to call "real" is only an appearance, or some limited degree of reality, and thought, similarly, only an approximation to its true nature.[4] In Professor Hobhouse's later volume, indeed (*The Rational Good*), there is very much that strongly confirms this position and is incompatible with his earlier emphasis on the classificatory function of concepts. "Rational method," we there find, "itself forms a whole of interconnected parts. The conception of reason . . . is the conception of a principle operative within experience the work of which is always partial and incomplete, always extending itself. . . . The proof of the body of judgements as a whole is in their standing together as a connected system. . . . So far as reality is finally intelligible to reason it must be interpretable as an organic whole, so that we may speak of reason as the ultimate organic principle alike in thought and in reality." [5] It will,

[1] Professor Mair, *Philosophy and Reality*, p. 9.

[2] *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. i. p. 370. *Cf.* vol. ii. pp. 13, 136.

[3] *Phenomenology*, vol. i. p. 55.

[4] *Cf.* Dr. Bosanquet, *Implication and Linear Inference*, pp. 148, 149.

[5] *The Rational Good*, pp. 63, 64. Professor Hobhouse appears, however, to recognise no concepts—no "systems of thought"—other than classifications; further, he seems to me to attribute to Dr. Bosanquet a view of the universal which

I think, be sufficient to repeat here the quotation from Hegel, already cited in Chap. V.; "to say that Reason is in the world" (*i.e.* "in reality") "is equivalent in its import to the phrase Objective Thought, that objectivity which is proper to the Idea—the Idea or system of reason." "Truth is the form which reality assumes when expressed through ideas in particular minds. You cannot have truth except as reality in ideal form. Thought is in its essence an effort to reconstruct the unity of the real in ideal form." "The Idea has truth only by means of being, and being has truth only by means of the Idea." [1]

This problem of the connection between thought and reality, or of the objective reference of all concepts, has so intimate a relation to our principal enquiry as to justify, I trust, this somewhat lengthy digression. It is, then, from the standpoint of the objective reality of Value as completeness or satisfactoriness that the discussion will be resumed in the succeeding chapter.

---

identifies it with the general—"Bosanquet's contention does not justify the use of the term universal derived from generality to characterise the individual." He then proceeds to distinguish generality from individuality—"Individuality is a connection, psychical, physical, or whatever it may be, running through many parts and constituting of them one whole" (*Theory of the State*, p. 70). But this is precisely what Dr. Bosanquet means by universality—"Universality lies in the expression of the nature of a system by each and all of its parts suitably to the place or function of each. A system so expressed or organised is a universal, and the nexus between its parts . . . is a universal nexus or law" (*The Principle of Individuality*, p. 120).

[1] Hegel, *Logic*, sec. 70. "Truth" for Hegel is often equivalent to reality—to complete or real nature.

XV

VALUE AS AN ETHICAL CRITERION

It has been argued in Chap. XIII. that it is only through the long-continued interplay of the various rationalised and feeling elements within primitive experience that "morality," as distinctively such, ultimately emerges. For behaviour, being in all its earliest forms controlled by desire and directed towards satisfaction, is necessarily profoundly affected by that advancing organisation of desire which constitutes its rationalisation and its subordination to the concepts of objective value. More and more, therefore, does action come to aim, not primarily and directly at attaining satisfaction, but also at the realisation of value, at first merely as the objective basis and means of satisfaction, and then increasingly as pure value—*i.e.* as completion, fullness, totality or perfection.

But although the general conditions which lie at the root of all moral experience appear to me to find their best expression in these terms, many difficult problems still remain. Quite obviously our analysis touches so far only the fringe of the subject-matter of Ethics proper. "If there is no power of determining conduct by the idea of a *self* other than the fragment of our nature which finds satisfaction in the objects of our

casual desires, all *moral* distinctions fall to the ground."[1] And what is still more serious, it seems as though all the distinctive features of morality have either been ignored, or have been assimilated, wholly without justification, in the single and apparently inadequate term "value." For is not value, as value, a predominantly non-moral category? Do we not think of it primarily as economic, or artistic, or intellectual, and then regard "moral value" as a quite unique type which has its own peculiar exclusive standards such as right, good, obligation, approbation and guilt? and is not therefore any attempt to reduce these ideas to terms of value a radical distortion of the whole ethical problem?

All this must be admitted to be fundamentally true; true, indeed, to such a degree that—paradoxical though it be—its very truth itself deceives and misleads us. For it is the highly dangerous truth of the obvious, so deeply impressed upon us by what appears the whole weight of experience that any qualification whatever seems to be inconceivable. To adopt a Hegelian analogy, it is the truth of the Thesis; and to accept it as final is to ignore that truth of the Antithesis which, despite any apparent contradiction, it itself logically implies; and this again involves that the deeper truth of the Synthesis remains altogether undreamt of and unrealised.[2] When, therefore, this primarily amoral interpretation of value, despite the admission of its truth, is subjected to criticism and to stricter analysis, it is not on the ground of its positive falsity but rather of its incompleteness,—of its blind-

[1] *Life of Edward Caird*, p. 305.

[2] For a succinct account of the transition from the Hegelian Thesis to the Synthesis *cf.* Wallace, *Prolegomena*, chap. xxv.

ness both to its own limitations and its unexpressed implications.

For it may almost be maintained that many of the root difficulties of ethical theory—and naturally in a minor degree of practical conduct—have their origin in this widespread conception of the moral sphere as being essentially unique and *sui generis*, and as having little or nothing in connection, therefore, with the other main categories of experience and reality; a conception which is perhaps best exemplified on the one hand by the extreme Puritanic condemnation of all artistic, intellectual and hedonistic criteria as such, and in the opposite direction by the repudiation of historic moral standards in the world of art and knowledge and feeling; so that "what shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet." [1] For the evils of this long conflict, which must become more and more serious as civilisation advances,[2] arise from the very truth which the opposing views enjoy. So far as it goes, that is, each of these standpoints is essentially true; but neither of them goes far enough to enable it to understand and appreciate the truth of its antagonist; and the first solution of the difficulty can be found only in a deeper philosophical conception of the whole nature of reality. Here it is instructive to note that the term "value" is common to all the contestants; and however much they differ, they agree at least in their defence of values of one kind or another.

The investigation of the ultimate ethical criterion,

[1] Professor A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 238; quoting Keats.

[2] "The contradiction or opposition will certainly not cease to exist in the future. On the contrary, it will grow. As mankind advances, religion will extend and deepen the meaning of the perfection which it demands, and, on the other hand, the evil of evil, the significance of its opposition to the good, will also become more evident" (Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 59).

then, has undoubtedly been hampered through being confined within limits which are, while legitimate enough in themselves, altogether too narrow. To restrict such concepts as "freedom" and "moral value" to the "moral" sphere, as commonly understood, is an error in principle which seriously embarrasses our apprehension of its problems. Enquiry has become concerned somewhat disproportionately with right and wrong action, responsibility, reward and punishment. These subjects are unquestionably of supreme importance; but they would have received more conclusive treatment if they had been considered in closer connection with other categories which are at bottom inseparable from them. The philosophical idealists, indeed, have fully recognised this truth. "A man is good in so far as his being is unified at all in any sphere of wisdom or activity. One cannot say that morality is entirely unimpaired by æsthetic or scientific incapacity." "We may hold that all true personality is moral."[1]

This is particularly the case with respect to the relation between conduct and the general nature of value. As has been said already, action, in escaping from the primal dominance of pure impulse and desire, becomes directed more and more to the realisation and conservation of some one or other of the many forms of value; and in this effort, since value comes to mean (in general terms) completion or perfection, it must always aspire to the highest level which it can conceive; for knowingly to remain content with anything less would be (obviously) deliberately to deny itself some measure or element of worth, and therefore to stultify

[1] Wallace, *Lectures on Theology and Ethics*, p. 265. *Cf.* Dean Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. i. pp. 138, 178.

itself. Hence—and again, I think, obviously—there cannot but result misconceptions and contradictions in theory arising from errors and failures in practice; and this in itself presents no difficulty.

For—it seems important to note—such a state of things in itself is very far from constituting what we feel to be our "moral experience"; it might indeed be held to describe fairly accurately nothing higher than the experience of a quasi-intelligent but essentially non-moral being. Responsibility—obligation—culpability—at least in any distinctively ethical sense—have not yet come into existence; and if at this stage we permit ourselves to employ such terms as "right" and "ought," this can only be in an indirect and derivative sense, much (once again) as we often do apply them to the behaviour of an animal, or even to some inanimate object; as *e.g.* when we say, "Summer time ought to be fine," or "This tower ought to be higher." In such instances, again, it is plain that it is the concept of value that is operative, either explicitly or implicitly; we refer, *i.e.*, to a standard or criterion of pleasure or of symmetry, which, however, is not an ethical criterion; this, in its relation to value, has still to be elucidated.

These considerations, then, determine the form of our final problem—that of the manner in which the general relation which naturally arises between behaviour or effort and value comes to acquire further those distinctive characters which mark *moral* experience. Before considering this subject in detail, I should like to recall the unbroken continuity which (I think) has been shown thus far to attend that development of reason, in its increasing influence on impulse and desire, which has led to the evolution of

the general concept of value; and here it is also essential to recollect the fundamentally objective nature both of value and of reason, which has already, however, been sufficiently dwelt upon.

What then is the specific nature of the moral situation? It is, I think, best expressed somewhat as follows. Every one who has come to "years of discretion" will admit his consciousness of a complex and comprehensive ideal which governs (in principle) the whole personality—character, motive, action, purpose and consequence; and the first thing to be remarked upon is the universality of this form of consciousness and its content, infinitely diverse though its individual instances are. Not to possess it in any degree at all is evidence of a defective or undeveloped nature; it is more acute, though it is also more crude, in the savage than in civilised man, and the honour of thieves is proverbial; when again it shrinks to nothing more than the calculation of consequences this is instinctively felt to be due to some degeneration of the moral fibre. All this is mere matter of fact; but its implications are all-important; for it means that moral experience is as real an element in the universe as are perception, thought and emotion; and that ethics therefore rests ultimately on precisely the same general—though not the same specialised—experiential basis as logic or æsthetics.

But it is possible here to raise afresh the whole issue, which has already been repeatedly referred to, between objectivity and subjectivity, and to argue—and this is especially the case with respect to its felt imperativeness—that this moral experience is after all to some degree illusory—if not in itself, at least as affording any indication of the actual content of real

being. Its existence for or within consciousness, *i.e.*, may be accepted, but not its objective validity; just as, *e.g.*, perception may be held to be only of phenomena, or truth to be but a matter of practice and of successful "working." The philosophical refutation of each of these contentions, since they are at bottom but varying expressions of one and the same fundamental scepticism, must follow the same main course. Philosophy, *i.e.*, must appeal both to the nature of our experience and the nature of its content as a whole,[1] in order to prove that if either of these its major constituents is objectively invalid then nothing whatever can be real. In this procedure there is of course nothing original; it is but a variant of Kant's transcendental method. But at the same time Kant's own application of it resulted in that dichotomy of reality into the phenomenal and the noumenal which—whatever justification its later form may find in relation to thought and knowledge—certainly seems to furnish no secure philosophic basis for moral experience.[2] Much recent discussion, again, has taken a negative, rather than a positive, direction; all our categories alike, it is often maintained, are equally artificial and without any final guarantee; if therefore, this argument proceeds, our ethical and religious concepts are but fictions, then our science and art are in no better case. This can hardly be felt to be satisfactory; it savours too much of the attitude of the Scotch elder who was deploring the decline in church membership. "It is very sad and

[1] We cannot say "the nature of reality," because it is just the witness of experience to reality that is being investigated; therefore to appeal here to "reality" would be to assume what is in question.

[2] Philosophically this statement may be applied to all the higher levels of experience—not moral experience alone. A clear and concise presentation of this criticism of Kant's standpoint has recently been given in *The Life and Philosophy of Edward Caird*, sec. iii. chap. iii. p. 270.

extremely serious," lamented he, " but," he fervently concluded, " thank God, the U.P.'s are no better off than we are!"

The defence of the objective validity of the moral consciousness, on the other hand, is often undertaken from standpoints which cannot be regarded as philosophically adequate. Neither the dogmatism—using the term here in its best sense—of religious experience nor the pragmatic appeal to the exigencies of life is beyond criticism. The first, it is true, is within its own sphere autonomous, and within those limits therefore it is self-sufficient and amply justified in all its deliverances. But it is just the question as to where lies the boundary of its special province that constitutes one of our most difficult problems, and any reasoned vindication of the religio-ethical code must take a philosophical form. As for Pragmatism, this is surely never more than a philosophic makeshift, which, in placing its emphasis on the appeal to results, incurs some peril of altogether losing its moral character; for there is a certain sense in which morality must adopt as its own that famous principle which has been expressed with more vigour than prudence by Lord Milner as " damn the consequences."

In somewhat more formal language this means that the moral ideal, in its relation to conduct and character, is always felt as essentially imperative. We instinctively feel—though with what justification remains to be seen—that in so far as this imperativeness is surrendered morality sinks to expediency; and it is then the nature of this imperative that constitutes in several respects the crucial difficulty for philosophic ethics. In the first place its forcibleness, in being directed as it so frequently is against the immediate happiness

of the individual, is in itself very remarkable; its source seems to lie in some sphere far beyond the man himself, so that his earthly welfare is willingly sacrificed at its behest. Nor can this intensity be regarded simply as the cumulative effect of age-long custom, impressed by each generation in its own interests upon its successor, much less as the device of tribal magician or national priesthood.[1] The specific content of the moral codes which it dictates varies with each age and culture, but in and through them all the absoluteness of its commands persists unimpaired. Thus it appears to conflict with the equally imprescriptible right of our nature to moral freedom, more particularly when it calls to its aid religious sanctions which may themselves be questioned, or descends to the level of mere convention as rigid as it is meaningless.

As we find it then in our concrete experience the moral ideal proclaims itself absolute and imperative; and until we become self-critical we feel this absoluteness, in some form or other, instinctively, immediately, intuitionally. But since it is part of the task of Philosophy to examine the credentials of intuition, it becomes incumbent on ethical theory either to substantiate, or to disavow, the validity of this moral imperative; and the solution of the problem is to be found only in the consideration of the nature and implications of value in its objectivity.

Accepting imperativeness then as an indubitable and indispensable factor in all actual moral experience, the problem now becomes: Has it any ground in the nature of reality? Is the universe such, and—what

[1] "Such attempts are now abandoned by serious and scientific writers" (Dean Rashdall, *Is Conscience an Emotion?*, p. 2).

is only another aspect of the same question—is human nature such, that an imperative is addressed to humanity which calls for implicit observance, at any cost to material happiness and personal welfare, and under penalty of spiritual doom for its defiance and neglect? and this not by way of any merely arbitrary punishment, imposed as it were from without, but through an inevitable and natural reaction upon the whole personality. For that, at bottom, is the crucial difficulty — this rigorous demand, proceeding as it were from ourselves to ourselves, or from our higher self to our lower self, for the sacrifice (on due occasion) of the whole individuality, it may be for the sake of an intangible ideal whose triumph we ourselves shall not live to see. Here we are met not by the necessity of thought or the imperious demands of art, whose reward is patent and certain; on the contrary the immediate consequences to ourselves must either be excluded altogether, or at least be given a subsidiary position; as Kant, *e.g.*, "denies that the moral character of an action is determined by its consequences in the way of happiness. The law which every rational being imposes upon himself is to act entirely independently of all subjective interest." [1] It is a claim, of course, that is always joyfully responded to by our noblest and best, and for many this its inherent grandeur is enough, and more than enough. But what is the verdict of cool reflection? If we choose to seek here for a cold-blooded "formal certainty" for "principles of conduct" [2] what do we obtain?

A philosophic Theism—perhaps even a Pantheism —has of course but one answer. But every meta-

[1] Professor J. Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, pp. 310, 329.

[2] *Cf.* the quotation from Sidgwick, p. 11, *ante*.

physic of these types itself requires, almost to the same degree as does our unreflective intuitional consciousness of duty, a prior justification, which, however, is not the direct aim of the present enquiry. For there is, I think, a sounder method of approach, which bases itself more on what we actually know of the universe than on what we would fain believe, and more on the nature of reality as a whole than of that small element thereof which is constituted by human personality. The fuller analysis of the general characteristics of objective value, in short, will yield a conception of Reality as being that which, in its relation to conduct, manifests itself as imperative; an imperative, however, never in any mechanical sense deterministic, but rather always asserting itself in and through true personal freedom; for this antithesis—between moral freedom and imperativeness—still awaits its final resolution.

XVI

THOUGHT AND INTUITION

But in thus seeking a sounder method of approach in what we know of the world we cannot avoid feeling that it is somewhat remarkable, in this respect, that modern thought should prove to be so much out of accord as it undoubtedly is both with our natural instinctive attitudes and their outcome in religious belief. If, on a matter of such fundamental importance, their joint verdict is at all reliable, why should it appear to be so difficult for reason, acting in its own appropriate sphere, to confirm this verdict? Several suggestions offer themselves in explanation of this apparent anomaly. In the first place, there is nothing in objective reality—using both terms here in their crude and naïve sense—that is analogous to human personality. Herein lies the advantage enjoyed by religion and by philosophic Theism; for the one postulates, and the other affirms, the existence of a Personality whose very nature itself creates a claim upon and command over mankind. But so far is this principle from being self-sufficient that our earliest criticism seems to establish the direct contrary, and thought then discovers impersonal and rigid law both in its own being and in the outer world. Humanity may certainly appear the last and the highest product

of a long evolution; none the less it is (at first sight) altogether insignificant and transient as compared with the grandeur and infinity of inanimate Nature. Man is then either an atom ruled like all else by mechanical law, his freedom an illusion and the moral ideal a chimera; or he is an anomaly which contradicts the true nature of Being, and his standards of life become mere conventions observed under a self-imposed imperative.[1]

But against any conclusions such as these, man eternally and instinctively rebels. The invariability of natural law may be real—it is indeed increasingly borne in upon him that it is so; but he feels that his own freedom is real too. Duty may have no foundation except as arising within himself, but when he repudiates it he contradicts his own nature; and this conflict must persist until these opposing view-points of thought and of instinctive belief become somehow harmonised. Until, however, the contrasted procedures of thought and of intuition respectively have been apprehended no satisfactory reconciliation is at all possible. For in their early stages, at least, intuition is synthetic while thought is analytic. But this does not imply, as is so frequently supposed, that these two activities of the mind are absolutely different from each other, or that the objects with which each is competent to deal belong to altogether different spheres; so that while thought attains the certainties of scientific truth, the creations of art and the revelations of religion can be apprehended only through the direct flash of intuition. It is, of course, easily possible to carry this contrast to still greater extremes, both in general and in philosophical opinion. Kant and Schopenhauer

[1] *Cf.* Mr. Bertrand Russell, "A Free Man's Worship" (*Mysticism and Logic*, p. 46).

and Bergson, *e.g.*, agree at least in regarding "pure reason" or intellect as inherently incapacitated from comprehending or revealing ultimate reality; to which the modern intellectualist is somewhat too prone to retort with a *tu quoque*, charging the intuitionist and mystic with dwelling in a visionary realm of false illusions and obstinately refusing to arouse themselves from their drugged slumber simply because its pleasures are too sweet.

But here, as so often elsewhere in present-day experience, the antithesis is too absolute. Intuition and intellective thought are, in reality, united by an imperishable bond; to suppress one is to destroy the other. Intuition is undoubtedly synthetic, but it is not therefore simple; similarly, intellectual thought is analytic, but not therefore altogether debarred from employing its own forms of true synthesis. "At intervals a soul arises," says Bergson, "which seems to triumph . . . by dint of simplicity—the soul of an artist or a poet."[1] This simplicity, however, is merely superficial; it is the simplicity of true art, which reposes on a concealed basis of extreme complexity—complexity, too, that is in the highest degree systematic, obeying its own irrefragable laws.[2] "The lyric," observes a gifted critic—"the lyric follows instinct; and in the immense range and difference of instinct lies the range of lyric poetry, and the differences—the greatest of all differences in poetry—between the good lyric and the bad. Only in the greatest poets," he continues, "do we find this inexplicable and overwhelming simplicity, the outcome

[1] Dr. J. A. Gunn, *Bergson and his Philosophy*, p. 102.

[2] "Intuitions are always the fruition of a toilsome experience." But "Intuition leaves no footmarks" (Sir H. Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 69).

of faultless instinct acting on elemental emotion."[1] Thus both the critic and the philosopher alike emphasise "simplicity"; but the first exhibits its essentially complex essence magically compounded of emotion and wide-ranging instinct, which the latter seems to disregard.

Intuition, in short, may be called perception—perception by the mind in virtue of an "inner sense" somewhat akin to that to which Kant attributed our consciousness of time, and parallel to ordinary perception by the corporeal senses. Both modes of perception—the inner equally with the outer—appear to be perfectly simple processes; but in both alike the mental activity and its resultant content are really extremely complicated. Their "simplicity" is in one case the simplicity of nature, in the other of art—in both alike the simplicity of an exquisitely finished yet highly intricate product, dependent for its subsistence and character upon the exact adjustment of all its interrelated elements. Both sense perception and spiritual intuition therefore are directed towards complex wholes which they themselves—unconsciously and automatically, it is true—elaborate; they are, in other words, essentially synthetic.

In what relation, then, does such intuition stand towards intellective thought? Once again we may compare it with sense perception; and just as this latter can never merely of itself furnish its own final justification, because it obviously frequently ends in illusion, so must intuition submit its appeal—on due occasion—to a criticism other than its own—to a criticism which intuition itself, precisely in virtue of its always synthetic method, can never undertake,

[1] Professor Mackail, *Lectures on Greek Poetry*, pp. 98, 101.

any more than perception, as such, can ever criticise itself. "Criticism" is here employed, of course, in its Kantian sense not of adverse condemnation but merely of careful and deliberate examination—never with its verdict formed in advance but always as absolutely impartial. And the reason why intuition, purely *as* intuition, is debarred from this critical task is because the adequate scrutiny of a synthesis is possible only through analysis—and intuition, as we have seen, is always synthetic. It is true that intuitions may, and very often do, confirm one another, and this mutual confirmation is almost always an invaluable criterion of their own truth; just as, once more, the perceptual world incessantly confirms and maintains itself. But this merely gives us new and still more complex syntheses, the result of further constructive activity explicit or implicit, and open therefore—merely as syntheses—to the analytical survey of Reason.

It is certainly true, as was remarked at the beginning of the present chapter, that modern thought has arrived at many conclusions markedly adverse to accepted intuitional truths of morality and of religion. But this antagonism is accidental, not essential; it is a question of facts and arguments, not of the nature of thought *as* thought, nor of intuition *as* intuition. The facts may have been misinterpreted and the arguments may be illogical; but these possible defects are not inherent in thought itself, nor can the merit of their correction be claimed exclusively by intuition. The only real corrective for bad logic is better logic. In principle, therefore, the conditions which appear to many to prevail in our own day may alter, just as, as a matter of history, they

have actually been different. In the Middle Ages reason was the ally of theology; it moulded the great creeds and upheld the sanctions of medieval morality; and this intimate union might have continued without interruption had not certain devout persons convinced themselves that reason could not be trusted out of ecclesiastical leading strings. Such an attitude has its Nemesis in the current exaggerated opposition between reason and intuition, wherein each contestant misreads at once its own nature and that of its rival. Signs are not lacking, however, that conditions are slowly improving. Dean Inge has pointed out that "a papal decree of 1855 declares that rational conclusions can prove with certainty the existence of God, the spiritual nature of the soul, and the freedom of the Will"; [1] and at the opposite pole of the world of thought we find this fully supported. "I would fain demonstrate . . . that the enquiry which makes the fullest use of severe intellectual methods, supports those beliefs upon which a religion that is worth having rests. Let man seek God by the way of pure reason, and he will find him. The mind of these times is not disturbed by aggressive scepticism. Agnosticism has also lost much of its charm now that science has recognised the limits of its task. So far from supporting the agnosticism or naturalism of last century, natural science now leaves the spiritual field comparatively clear for the theologian and the philosopher. Reason will serve religion as soon as religion allows reason to be free." [2]

At the same time all these considerations, even if we add to them the patent fact of the frequent clash

[1] *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 179.

[2] Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, pp. vii, 18, 25, 105.

between intuitions themselves, do not touch the real issue of principle, which concerns, wholly apart from the historic course taken by their varying interrelation, the essential connection which, under all circumstances, binds together reason or thought and intuition. The latter we have seen to be synthetic, while thought, in the first instance at least, is analytic; and so regarded, it would appear to be inevitable that they are in great measure opposed to one another. But while this is true, it is true only in part—only to the extent that thought begins, and indeed must begin, its work in and through analysis. For, in whatever direction it may turn, thought finds itself confronted with what are always (to some degree) wholes, or complexes, or combinations of simpler elements; and these need not be specifically "intuitional"; they may be of any type—perceptual, instinctive, conceptual, emotional, or any other. Reason again may begin, and often does begin, by uniting these disconnected entities into still more elaborate combinations; but experience has shown that this attempt may be too hastily undertaken, and that the surest course to pursue is to preface any further construction by an effort to understand the real nature of the constituent materials; and this is possible only by their analytical examination and dissection.

So infinitely complex, again, proves to be the constitution of the universe that its analysis, once embarked upon, seems to be endless; the immediate consequence being that modern science is predominantly analytical, and the more so—obviously—the higher the type of its subject matter. For where the field of enquiry is relatively simple and abstract, there the necessary preliminary analysis, although never finally consum-

mated, soon reaches a stage at which synthesis—which may be but provisional and hypothetical—may be resumed; as *e.g.* in mathematics and the physical sciences; although here it is important to notice that their reconstructions are limited in the main to their own specific provinces. It is only recently that they have been driven by the pressure of their own immanent logic to approximate to one another and to invade each other's native spheres of influence; so that by the side of the older sciences there now stand bio—and physical—chemistry, while all alike are regulated to some degree by mathematical conceptions. But if, in these relatively elemental provinces of nature, the syntheses—for such these approximations really are—are as yet only partial, to a much greater extent must this hold true in all the higher ranges of reality—in life, consciousness and mind; here analysis remains almost the sole weapon of thought in its attack upon the Gordian knots of the world, despite the splendid theories which stand to the credit of recent science. The higher we rise, therefore, in the scale of Being the more must thought, simply because it is still limited to its analytical methods, appear as incompatible with intuition or belief.

Nevertheless analysis never remains the sole or final instrument of reason; it is always the necessary preliminary to the surer reconstruction of truth. This is plainly true of the vast and intricate structures of modern mathematics—most analytic of all sciences; whose systems are now so complex and difficult that no single mathematician can comprehend them all, while the non-mathematician can understand nothing of them; for the mathematician of to-day is brother to the poet—like him born and not made. But this

principle of the synthetic tendency of reason which is so plainly exhibited in mathematics is really universal in its application; reconstruction, and not simply analysis, always furnishes its permanent impulse and constitutes its ultimate goal; and it is here that we discover the inseverable bond between reason and intuition—in their common synthetic activity and contents.

Thus "the ultimate tendency of thought is to constitute a world";[1] but the identity between intuition and thought may be traced still further. Reason is obviously fully conscious of both its analytic and its synthetic aspects, since they function only as complementary to each other. Intuition, on the contrary, appears to be unconscious of the character of its own activity; it seems—at least to the external observer—to be almost instantaneous, self-acting, simple; we speak of illuminating "flashes of intuition." But it is extremely doubtful that this is literally true; it would appear to be but the superficial impression of the average and inartistic onlooker. A famous genius has defined his own gift as the "capacity for taking infinite pains"; and that every great work of art necessitates long and laborious effort on the part of its creator is notorious.[2] The slow growth within the artist's own mind is hidden from view; and the world, seeing only the sudden springing forth of the flaming flower, hastily takes that to be all that there is, and ignores the long and secret processes which have gone to its making. For confirmation of this truth we may turn to three great modern poets who were

[1] *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 55.

[2] "The true sculptor must begin with a thorough study of anatomy" (Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 286).

also able critics of their own art. First Coleridge, whom Dr. Richard Garnett has called the most penetrating critic Britain ever possessed. "No man," Coleridge tells us, "was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher." Next Francis Thompson's deeply suggestive phrase in his tribute to Shelley—"His thoughts scorch through all the folds of expression";[1] an utterance in which lies the secret of all art. And finally Shelley himself in *Adonais*:

> When lofty thought
> Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
> And love and life contend in it, for what
> Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there.

In harmony with this is the citation from Schiller which Wallace has given in his notes to Hegel's *Logic*.[2] "Through beauty the sensuous man is led to form and to thought; through beauty the intellectual man is led back to matter and restored to the sense-world"; and though Hegel's own view may be discounted as *ex parte*, still it is worth consideration. "In poetry all depends on the representation—which must be full of matter and thought—of man, of his profounder interests, and of the powers that move him; mind and heart must be profoundly educated by life, experience and reflection, before genius can bring to pass anything mature, substantial, and self-complete."[3]

Reason then, at its highest and truest level, is in essence one with intuition. Both are synthetic, and deal with wholes; and there is an immanent reason

[1] *Shelley*, p. 53. *Cf.* p. 5, *ante*, note 4.

[2] P. 405 (2nd edition).

[3] *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, p. 89. He instances the early and immature work of Goethe and Schiller. *Cf. Logic*, p. 386 (Wallace, 2nd edition).

in all the great creations of artistic genius. The content of both, again, is not only synthetic, but it is systematically so; it is differentiated and organised throughout its whole extent. As Dr. Bosanquet has recently expressed an established principle of his idealism, "intuition means looking at an object intrinsically systematic and distinct, and discerning its constitutive terms and relations. So far from being illogical, it is the essential feature of the higher form of inference." [1]

Intuition, retaining all that it *feels* as real, instinctively creates therewith a whole in spite of any slight indications of disharmony between its parts; while thought on the other hand can comprehend the complex and discordant content of experience only through the analytic tracing of its immanent law. If therefore these two divergent methods and standpoints are regarded as being final, their conflict is inevitable. But when thought further proceeds to unite its law-governed elements into the organic whole whence they originally sprang, it finds mechanical necessity gradually transfiguring itself into self-determining freedom; and thus the whole created by intuition becomes freed from its persistent contradictions and so is identified with the unity of reason.

These considerations apply with special force, I think, to the connection between value, and conduct as directed to its realisation. Here intuition, in all its manifold forms, employs those standards which are for itself final and sufficient; and it is essential to note that this is true not only of "moral" standards, in the usual sense of the term, but equally of æsthetic and intellective criteria. Between all these there is

[1] *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 94.

in principle an underlying connection, so that each throws light on the others; and all are alike and equally "free," in the sense of being rationally self-determined. Whatever then is conceived as value—and this really means, as has been pointed out already, as the highest value attainable under any given conditions—is intuitively conserved and cherished; but if again the later realisation of a still higher value demands its sacrifice, without question it is at once relinquished. But to act thus—*i.e.* without question and without criticism—is impossible for thought, from its very nature; not of course in the sense that thought is divorced from activity, but rather that it is the essential function of reason to seek for adequate justification. And in its bearing upon conduct, this search assumes a twofold form. We must ask, in the first place, what the supreme or highest value is; and in the second, in what way it is connected with that moral imperative, whose activity within normal experience has already been accepted as universal and indubitable. The succeeding chapter is concerned with the approach to the former of these two questions.

XVII

THE NATURE OF VALUE

We may preface our consideration of the ultimate nature of value by recalling its twofold aspect. Subjectively, in the first place, value is the attribute of whatever yields satisfaction in itself, or is the means thereto; objectively, on the other hand, since we interpret desire always as an indication of some defectiveness, value is the capacity to produce or to confer completion or perfection, either wholly or in part;[1] and if there is some natural hesitation in the use of the latter term, this is because perfection in any literal sense is never attained; none the less every increase in completeness is plainly one step towards an ideal perfection. And although further, in consonance with what has been said already with respect to subjectivity and objectivity, this distinction between satisfaction and completeness is but one of emphasis or aspect, still it is, philosophically, a matter of the utmost importance where this emphasis is laid; the issue depends here on whether we say that whatever satisfies is valuable, or that whatever conduces in some way or other to completeness has value, and

[1] It is unnecessary for the purpose of my main argument to undertake here any more detailed analysis of values themselves, since these would all alike present the two phases indicated, although of course in always varying proportions.

will therefore satisfy. The one criterion is merely pragmatic, individual, subjective, and possesses therefore no explicit self-consistent principle; the other is philosophic, universal, and—in the highest sense of the word—practical. Certainly it is true that in the end this contrast will disappear, and then perfection and satisfaction will become one; but unhappily "the end is not yet."

Reason then in its survey of concrete experience must select power to confer completeness—fullness—perfection—as the only true and final criterion of value; and then to say that perfection is, under actual conditions, ever unattainable, really means that however complete any thing or situation may become, there is always conceivable some further degree of fuller realisation. Even if we say that certain poems, or objects of art, or moods and experiences, are of themselves perfect, so that to modify them or to add to them in any way whatever would be but to mar and vitiate them, still it is obvious that the use here of the term "of themselves" at once implies some limitation which nothing forbids us (in principle) to transcend.[1] Just as it used to be said that Parliament is wiser than its wisest member, so the universe of Art outranges the greatest of its individual products, and Life ought to be fuller than any passing phases, however profoundly it may be enriched or transformed by these. This result indeed inevitably follows from the nature of value itself as involving some contribution to completeness; so that wherever value exists or arises, there is always implied a more inclusive complex within which this finds its place, and apart from which it

[1] *Cf.* Professor A. C. Bradley, "Poetry for Poetry's Sake," *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, pp. 4-7.

would not exist as value, or at least as that particular type of value, at all.

This point, which is of fundamental importance, is very frequently disregarded. It is often maintained, for example, as being a necessary corollary of an idealist or a subjectivist philosophy, that value is in many cases created wholly anew, and indeed may be so created almost arbitrarily; or, again, that it can have no real existence apart from mind or consciousness or experience. But so far as this is true it always means that some complex situation—some more or less extensive assemblage of conditions—arises, either of its own accord or of set purpose, which is, as it stands, in some way or other incomplete and defective; and it is only in response to this and in relation to it that "value" of any sort can exist. And the "value" which thus comes into being is always some concrete and specific kind of value, or, more precisely, there is always—like the prior complex of conditions itself—some definite object or situation which possesses or acquires value in virtue of its power to remove the existing defectiveness. This essential concreteness or specificity of value appears too frequently to be overlooked, and many of the difficulties which attend discussion arise from the resultant confusion between the abstract *concept of value*—as a concept—and those concrete entities in which alone value actually inheres. Value, *i.e.*, is never an independent and separately existing element which may exist detached from everything else in the world, or which unites itself, either naturally or artificially, to other things different from itself in their nature. Certainly there is a distinguishable and—in that sense—separate *concept of value*—a general idea, that is, which has been derived by abstraction from all

the various objects and situations which actually possess value. But this does not mean that we can regard value itself as existing wholly apart from these objects, any more than, *e.g.*, health or knowledge ever exists, except as a characteristic of actual individuals. When, therefore, in the course of the world's unceasing development objects are brought into relations which are entirely new, when in this manner they become elements within some wholly fresh system and so enter into new combinations, it is inevitable that they thereupon acquire values which are also absolutely new, simply because certain unities and totalities have arisen which are entirely without precedent, and to whose completeness all these factors in some degree contribute. This is most obvious perhaps in the case of the incessantly changing and newly arising economic values which attend advancing civilisation; but it is equally true with reference to mind or experience. For during the whole course of its evolution, mind has acted as the dominating principle or controlling spirit of increasingly complex and comprehensive systems which are constituted in part by entities existentially and temporally prior to mind itself—by the objects of the physical world and of the realm of Life—entities which have therefore acquired fresh or additional value through their absorption within these more inclusive combinations. Of course if we go further than this—if we regard experience or mind as the sole reality—then it obviously follows that value can have no existence apart from mind. But then neither can any other real; this principle, supposing it to be true, applies equally to everything that exists without any exception, and therefore can have no *special* reference to value. It is perfectly plain

indeed that it actually concerns not the nature of value as such, but rather the nature of ultimate reality; and if these two distinct problems are identified with one another then confusion is inevitable.

Value, then, always has reference to some inclusive and interrelated system, and varies with the degree to which that system is enabled to attain and conserve its ideal completeness. If now we go on to press this concept of ideal completeness to its logical conclusion —if, in other words, we take in its full literalness the fact that actual perfection is within our experience impossible,—we perceive that beyond every existent combination of reals which falls within experience there is some still more comprehensive system within which these may find their due place and fulfil some definite function. It is of course true that the limitations inseparable from all finite experience debar us always to some extent from justly appreciating this principle, just as, in another direction, the practical necessities of life force us to act within spheres whose narrowness is the measure of our own incapacity. But every advance in the level of experience, whatever form this may take,—whether in art or in knowledge or in religion—testifies to an infinite unity underlying our limited world, apart from which even such experience as we do enjoy would be impossible. It is perhaps a matter of secondary importance what term we adopt to designate this unity, and what precise relations we suppose to exist between it as a whole and its constituents. The more essential thing is to apprehend the reality of the interconnected whole itself, to whose unbroken unity science (as has been seen) increasingly testifies, finding it one in its nature and activity throughout infinite space and unending

time. It is within this whole, as in a matrix, that all the systems which thought can discover or art and practice produce really exist. They are but parts distinguished or maintained for certain always special and limited purposes; of themselves they have no independent being, any more than the objects of perceptual experience have any separate real existence apart from the whole of Nature which underlies and originates them. On the contrary, it is this natural order which, as a whole, determines their specific character and relations, and confers upon them their distinctive attributes.[1]

But this does not mean that perception, as such, entirely deceives us, or that the perceived distinctions between things are altogether illusory and unreal. We need neither suppose, with Bergson, that the intellect always and necessarily distorts the ever-flowing reality, nor regard the perceived world as merely a phenomenal veil which conceals a noumenal and inaccessible realm of real being. On the contrary the characteristics of the perceived world, together with those conceptual attributes which reason leads us to assign to it, are—apart, *i.e.*, from proved errors and illusions—as we perceive them, truly real, and indeed apart from such real differences between objects no proper unity would be possible; all we should find would be a barren and featureless uniformity. None the less must the first crude experience which yields these primary distinctions become corrected and supplemented, as knowledge advances, by the concept of Nature both as real and as one whole—a concept which is itself very largely based on a perception

[1] *Cf.* "Every fact is finally explicable only in the light of the universe to which it is related" (*A Faith that Enquires*, p. 66).

rendered ever increasingly acute and profound by the swiftly growing power of scientific instruments and apparatus.

Value then always implies contributoriness—whether positively by expansion or addition, or negatively by the removal or suppression of what is felt to be a hindrance or an obstacle; and this again leads to the principle of an ever wider and more inclusive whole from which not only value itself, as such, derives its reality but likewise all those systems, distinguished by perception and thought, within which value to be real must inhere. But the competence of both thought and perception to reveal reality has repeatedly been questioned throughout the long history of Philosophy. By some thinkers sense-perception, or even sensation, is regarded as solely trustworthy; by others perception is condemned as incapable of bringing us into relations with ultimate and permanent reality; or again some non-perceptual and non-intellectual faculty, such as the "intuition" of Bergson or the vision of the mystic, is advocated as the only method of revelation and of intercourse. Any adequate discussion of the many problems which centre on this long controversy would necessitate a survey of the entire field of philosophic thought and is therefore impossible within the limits of the present enquiry. On the other hand it will be recalled that the starting-point for ethics was taken to be the world in the light of the fullest knowledge we possess—the universe as interpreted by modern science, and by conceptions based upon the facts of science.[1] Regarded from the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, this becomes the total content—in the main—of the interrelated activities of perception and conception.

[1] *Cf.* Chap. V.

The whole which these faculties, throughout the previous course of this enquiry, have been taken to reveal is, once more, the whole within which value, and the systems possessing value, subsist. It is impossible therefore to evade the challenge so often directed to the authenticity of the deliverances of perception and conception, either alone or in conjunction with each other. A brief statement of the general standpoint adopted will therefore be attempted before resuming the consideration of value and its connection with the moral imperative.

XVIII

KNOWLEDGE AND THE REAL WORLD

One of the most prominent currents in present-day philosophical speculation is the tendency towards Realism.

Realism is a word that has many shades of meaning; but it is used here to denote the philosophic standpoint which maintains that the objects in the physical, or material, or sense-perceived, world are themselves real in the form under which, in the main and apart from error and illusion, they appear to discriminative perception. This position is obviously that which is occupied, only instinctively and naïvely, by the average non-philosophical individual; but it requires very little in the way of criticism and analysis, and but a moderate knowledge of the complex conditions governing the processes of perception and of ideation, to show that what seems at first sight to be an unquestionable and almost self-evident truth is actually replete with difficulties and contradictions.

Partly as a consequence of this, and partly through a long-standing misapplication of the term "idea," the theory has been advanced by many eminent thinkers —and again under many varying forms—that the real physical world in itself is never the same as the world we perceive; and that the directly perceived universe,

therefore, though never wholly deceptive or illusory, is nevertheless not ultimately real—*i.e. as* physical or material—but is a succession or combination of mental states of the percipient's own consciousness; a "world" of sensations or feelings or ideas which exist within his mind, being produced therein by the causal agency of the unperceivable material world, and functioning as a body of signs or symbols which point to the underlying reality, even while they also conceal this from our perceptual experience.

So cursory a statement as the foregoing is manifestly very far from adequately presenting the intricate issues of this historic controversy. But to expand it would involve too extensive a digression from the ethical problem with which we are concerned; while at the same time any more detailed presentation would inevitably fail to meet with unanimous acceptance either from realists or from subjectivists or idealists. But this lack of detail is easily compensated by reference to the many able volumes which deal with the whole difficult question, and what follows here must be limited to a brief presentation of the realist position in its main features and with reference to some of the latest phases of discussion.

Two main points will be emphasised: first, the confusion which has attended the use—or perhaps misuse—of the term Idealism; and secondly, the recent marked change in the attitude of scientific thinkers, in approaching the subject from their own distinctive standpoint, towards the problem of physical reality. It is perhaps this last point that will appear to many to be of the greatest importance; for scientific thought has deservedly gained so high a reputation for its thoroughness and disinterested sincerity that its

verdict will unfailingly have a marked influence upon the general body of opinion.

It is a familiar fact that the science of last century, so far as it concerned itself with the philosophic problem at all, was predominantly subjectivist or idealist. Knowledge—at least scientific knowledge—dealt always only with phenomena—even with epiphenomena; with appearance and sense-impressions, rather than with real matter in itself and directly. Such a situation might be regrettable, but, as it was inevitable, regrets were vain; and sense-impressions, if subjected to careful observation and supplemented by experiment and theoretic calculation, were themselves so highly ordered and systematically interconnected as to be amply sufficient to enable science to achieve its ever memorable triumphs.

In adopting this standpoint scientists appear in the main to have been influenced, though to a large extent unconsciously, first by the prevailing philosophic atmosphere of the preceding era, and secondly by what appeared to be the logical conclusions from the nature of nervous process, and the part played by the brain in the elaboration of knowledge. Thought seemed to be produced by the brain in the same way as bile by the liver; and though this view may easily be pressed to crudeness, still the measure of truth that it expresses can never be disregarded. As a result, the ruling subjectivism of the earlier period appeared to gain support from every extension in our knowledge of cerebral functions, and left its deep impress accordingly on the general scientific attitude in the form either of an equally definite subjectivism or of a more or less vague agnosticism. The scientific world acquiesced in the idealism of Berkeley or Kant or Hume, resigned

itself to the unknowableness of the substance both of mind and of matter, and proceeded to elaborate its own real universe of atoms and molecules, energy and force.

To unweave the Gordian knot thus presented to speculation is here impossible; but the recent reaction from this subjectivism to what is perhaps best termed "physical realism" may best be appreciated by recognising that the philosophy of knowledge which has just been outlined, involves a radical confusion between the process or activity of knowing, and the content or object with which knowledge is concerned, or upon which it is directed, or which enters into, or appears before, the mind;[1] all these variations of expression are necessitated by the many aspects of the problem as well as by the different ways in which the entire situation has been presented. Very briefly, however, it must be emphasised that while the activity or process of knowing undoubtedly depends directly upon the correlative activities of the brain and the sense organs, it does not therefore follow that the existence or the character of the objects which are thus perceived or known also depends on those organic and cerebral functions. Quite obviously, we are concerned with two entities which are altogether distinct, even while they remain always connected with each other. The *process* of seeing or of touching (in other words) is one affair; the *object seen* or touched is quite another. The first depends on brain and sense organ; but it does not therefore follow that the second also does so; and unless we begin with the assumption that the mind

[1] The distinction between perceiving, and what is perceived, is indeed patristic. "Augustine distinguished the act or process of perception from the content perceived" (Mr. Ginsberg, *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xvii. p. 145).

can know only what is mental, and can therefore never directly know anything non-mental or material, there is no *primâ facie* ground for including the perceived world within the same category as those mind activities or processes of experience whereby it always is perceived and known. Once this fundamental distinction —in itself an old one—is recognised, subjectivism at once ceases to be logically inevitable; its basal postulate has disappeared, and the possibility, to say the least, of a realistic theory of knowledge and of perceived reality is established. It must be sufficient to add that the subjectivist standpoint, in itself, is as full of difficulties as any type of realism, while some well-known forms of its scientific interpretation plainly involve a radically fallacious circular argument.

A brief quotation from an able living thinker will illustrate this contention. "The colour," argues Mr. Bertrand Russell, "ceases to exist if I shut my eyes, the sensation of hardness ceases to exist if I remove my arm from contact with the table, the sound ceases to exist if I cease to rap the table."[1] Here, quite obviously, the two classes of entities referred to above as being distinct from one another are hopelessly confused. Colour—hardness—sound—all these, together with the other attributes of physical things, constitute one class; the sensation, or awareness or consciousness of these entities altogether a different one; although, as has been said already, the two classes are indissolubly connected together. "If I shut my eyes" what "ceases to exist" is my awareness—my sensation—of the colour; but this fact in itself need not imply that the colour also vanishes from existence.

[1] *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 42. *Cf.* J. S. Mill's *Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy*, chap. xi.

This distinction indeed is recognised by Mr. Russell himself; it is "the *sensation* of hardness" which ceases to exist, not hardness itself; and he has himself previously pointed out that "whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation *of* the colour, but the colour itself is a sense-datum, not a sensation. The colour is that *of* which we are immediately aware, and the awareness itself is the sensation."[1] Mr. Russell, it will be seen, has here disregarded his own initial distinction between the "sense-datum" or content, and the "sensation" or process; and once this disjunction is recognised the main postulate of subjectivism is destroyed.

It is extremely interesting, therefore, to find that physical science is at last arousing itself from its prolonged acceptance of phenomenalism. "There is now reigning in philosophy and in science," asserts another eminent mathematician and physicist, "an apathetic acquiescence in the conclusion that no coherent account can be given of nature as it is disclosed to us in sense-awareness without dragging in its relations to mind. The result has been disastrous both to science and to philosophy."[2] Dr. Whitehead then proceeds further to repudiate the familiar distinction between noumenal and phenomenal existence, and between primary and secondary qualities, as being "no distinction at all," and contends that the philosophy of science must be "the philosophy of the thing perceived. Everything perceived is in nature. We may not pick and choose. The red glow of sunset should be as much part of nature as are molecules and electric waves. There is but one nature, the nature which

[1] *Ibid.* p. 17.

[2] Dr. A. N. Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*, p. 27.

is before us in perceptual knowledge." [1] In the same spirit the investigators of radioactivity and of scientific relativity are prepared to accord to electrons and to atoms, with their mass properties and spatial configurations, a reality that is continuous and consubstantial with that of the ordinary objects of everyday experience.

"The modern student of physical science believes in the reality of the existence of his atoms and molecules, as much as he does in that of chairs, tables, and lamp-posts . . . one of the most striking features of the change of outlook since 1869. The change of the single atom is well within the range of direct perception by the senses." "The physicist believes that atoms and molecules really exist; the existence of atoms in the real world of physics is fully demonstrated. . . . We may think of the interval as something intrinsic in external nature—an absolute relation of two events, which postulates no particular observer." [2]

Thus the philosophy of physical science has undergone what is almost another Copernican revolution. "It may be doubted whether, fifty years ago, chemists and physicists believed very deeply in the actual reality of the molecules and atoms, which they used as convenient and simplifying conceptions to interpret the behaviour of matter." [3] Whereas to-day, as we perceive, the world of Nature is regarded by science as being a unified interrelated system which is indubitably real; although to remain content with this principle and to say that the natural world is the *only*, or the full, reality, may prove to yield us nothing higher than a more or less refined materialism.

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 28, 29, 40.

[2] Professor Soddy, *Nature*, vol. 104, pp. 230, 231. Professor Eddington, *Space, Time and Gravitation*, pp. 180, 181, 46.

[3] Professor Soddy, *ibid.*

And this brings us to the other fact which this account of the relation between knowledge and reality is intended to emphasise. For one leading type of Idealism has always endorsed, although (naturally) in a critical spirit, the "realism" of everyday experience and of modern physics. "Certainly for myself," affirms one of its best-known exponents, "the position is that a chair is a chair right enough; what an upholsterer would tell you about it is quite a true description. The world of sense-perception has being in its own right; and the splendours and values which we seem to contemplate directly are apprehended by us as they truly are. If it is a mind and eye that say 'red' under certain conditions, that makes no difference to the reality of red."[1] Similarly elsewhere, but in more general terms. "All which we call body is in some sense an incarnation of the spirit. Nevertheless it is an incarnation, and is not a mere state of mind. We experience natural objects as full concrete existences, with real qualities of colour and sound and splendour . . . meaning by body that which a sane philosophy accepts as concretely and completely actual in the world of sense-perception."[2]

Nothing could be further removed from subjectivism or phenomenalism than this idealistic account of the process and content of sense-perception. It is identical with, while at the same time critical towards, both the non-philosophical standpoint and the scientific realism of Dr. Whitehead and his collaborators. Why then does it claim to share the name Idealism with a theory which Mr. Russell defines as

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, pp. 5, 2, 7. *Cf.* also p. 141.

[2] *Proc. British Academy*, vol. ix. pp. 11, 12.

follows—"We shall understand by it the doctrine that whatever exists, or at any rate whatever can be known to exist, must be in some sense mental";[1] or with that of the Italian idealist Croce, for whom "external nature" is not "a truly real reality, (but) a construction or abstraction of the intellect"?[2] The explanation of these conflicting uses of the term lies in the historic transformations of the meaning of "idea"; but for Dr. Bosanquet—and he refers us back to Green and Hegel and Plato—Idealism "does not volatilise our world of fact, but accepting for it all that it claims of existence and reality, passes on to interpret its conditions, and assign its significance more profoundly. . . . It is only as you build up experience in all its richness of detail that you can begin to approach the real whole or the completer mind which this kind of idealism aspires to apprehend. . . . You have an immediate and continuous unity in which reflection can find order."[3] The task of Idealism of the Platonic and Hegelian type, then, is to place all "reals," whether physical or mental or spiritual, in their true relation to each other and—what is the same thing from another standpoint—to the "real whole"; to divine their proper level and function within the all-inclusive "continuous unity."[4]

There is then no necessity to seek for the real world in some sphere above or beyond that which normal experience reveals to us. Idealism merely insists that such experience never grasps more than some fragment

[1] *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 58.

[2] *Aesthetic*, p. 397; Appendix, Lecture on "Pure Intuition." *Cf.* "Croce denies or rejects the reality of the external world" (Dr. Wildon Carr, *Mind*, vol. xxix. p. 208).

[3] *The Meeting of Extremes*, pp. 2, 3, 19.

[4] *Cf.* Wallace, *Prolegomena*, pp. 147, 148.

or aspect of complete reality; but in order to remove this essential defectiveness of our experience all that is required is to endeavour to apprehend more and more of real being, without repudiating any of the real elements which have already been attained. Certainly as this process of growth and expansion goes on the character of reality undergoes a correlative change, exactly as with the increase of knowledge all its truths acquire fresh aspects and a fuller meaning. In both cases the ruling conditions are the same; for in both the elements already achieved fall within an ever-widening totality, and inevitably assume new relations in the light of that totality. The organs of the growing body—the citizens of an expanding nation—the characteristics of a developing personality—all furnish obvious concrete instances of this universal principle. Within this Whole, finally, values, and the systems possessing value, subsist.

In spite of its infinite diversity therefore, it is a true unity. But in the endeavour to bring its unity into relation with its diversity a marked contrast appears to arise between the standpoint of science and of some types of philosophy. This is the contrast between Monism and Pluralism, and to it a brief consideration must now be accorded.

XIX

MONISM AND PLURALISM. SUBSTANCE AND SUBJECT

So far as science commits itself explicitly to any philosophic interpretation of the whole body of its observations, and perhaps this is still more true with regard to its implicit spirit and tendency, it is definitely monistic, in the sense that it is prepared to postulate the universal reign of laws which, despite the dissimilarity of their manifestations, still exhibit an underlying unified harmony. This is undoubtedly true of each science within its own particular sphere, and equally so in those border regions where the separate sciences approach each other.

The phrase "reign of law" may, of course, be interpreted either literally or freely. It may express the operation of actual controlling natural influences, or it may refer to the possibility of grouping widely diverse ranges of phenomena within some concise statement or single formula, while leaving open the question of the reality of any operative agencies in nature. But both schools of thought would accept the conception of one inclusive system of law, interrelated and self-consistent, so that every apparent contradiction witnesses to a deeper unity; as *e.g.* in the recent developments of the Theory of Relativity;

" the universal law or principle which is manifested in particular properties of things and explains them to us by bringing them into organic relation with one another." [1]

Within philosophy itself, on the other hand, there always persists the age-old tendency to pluralism—a tendency which is thoroughly justified if it is understood as a protest against any merely *abstract* type of monism or idealism; for " any Monism which can stand its ground will not exclude Dualism." [2] Nevertheless every pluralistic system must accord recognition to a principle of unity of one kind or another. " Of the great systems of the past," affirms a modern pluralist, " the Monadology of Leibniz is perhaps the most remarkable for (its) logical skill. . . . From it all modern pluralisms derive their central theme." [3] But the pluralism of Leibniz had certainly a monistic aspect, if not indeed a monistic basis. For his problem in itself was to " endeavour to reconcile the notion of substance as *continuous* with the contrary notion of substance as consisting of *indivisible elements* . . . to interpret the relation of whole and parts so that the continuity or complete unity of the whole shall not be in conflict with the definiteness or real diversity of the parts. . . . Whole and part are inseparable. . . . The whole stands in a dynamic relation to the part; passes into it and expresses itself through it." [4] Thus we are here concerned throughout with concepts which are at bottom obviously monistic—with continuity, wholeness, unity, substance; and even if " substance " is pluralistically interpreted as " sub-

[1] *Life of Edward Caird*, p. 336.
[2] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 148.
[3] Mr. C. A. Richardson, *Spiritual Pluralism*, p. 66.
[4] Professor Latta, *Leibniz*, pp. 21, 22, 31.

stances," still there remains their universal interaction in virtue of that "pre-established harmony" which was another fundamental principle of this historic system. And as later pluralisms are affiliated to the Leibnizian Monadology, even so must they preserve the same basal unity.

"A *mere* plurality," continues Mr. Richardson, "contains within itself no concrete ground of interaction. Accordingly we must supplement pluralism by postulating as this ground some concrete all-pervading principle or entity which mediates the interaction of the monads, and which makes of their plurality a unity as well. . . . As an ontological hypothesis, pluralism is incomplete. We have a question of all or none. There must be a *single* such entity, or *none* of the monads could interact. But if it is present *all* must interact . . . an idea foreshadowed by Leibniz." [1]

That such a position should be assumed by a consistent modern pluralist philosopher is of the utmost significance. We may agree further that "we are not here concerned with the nature of this entity," except in so far as it necessarily implies an all-embracing system of reality within which every limited or finite real finds its due place, and functions as an indispensable contribution towards full completeness; which again means, when its true significance is perceived, that philosophic insight must attempt to attain the comprehension of every real as in its relation to the whole, or (again to fall back upon the classic pluralism of Leibniz) as "a representation of the whole from some particular point of view, a symbol or expression, in such a way that the whole might be unfolded entirely from within it." [2]

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 203, 250, abridged. [2] Professor Latta, *op. cit.* p. 33, abridged.

But while thus witnessing to the ultimate unity of reality, Pluralism is also absolutely justified in its emphasis upon the equally real *diversity* of the innumerable parts which constitute the whole. It should indeed be obvious that such differences, vital and deep-seated as they come to be in following the eternally divergent paths of development, are all positively requisite to any unity that is worth the name. For only a highly potent individuality can hold together elements so contrasted as seem (to our thought) the multitudinous parts of being. Just as a great tragedy owes its sublimity to the conflict between its contending personalities, so that apart from their irreconcilable opposition there is no tragedy, so except as manifested in the multiplicity of its diverse constituents there can be no truly *unified* whole. Its identity is never the mere homogeneity of similars, but is the deeper identity which underlies and actually demands fundamental differences. "There can be no *profound* unity where the factors unified are not strongly opposed." [1]

The ultimate Whole, therefore, which it is the aim of Philosophy to comprehend and to explicate, is no vain dream of abstract thought; it is rather that which, as it continuously becomes more profound and comprehensive, all our experience discovers equally within and without itself as at once real and unified—as a Unity which derives its being and basis from the very diversity of its infinite elements. But if we now regard this principle from a slightly different point of view, it means that each of these elements contributes to the whole something which is essential and which cannot be dispensed with; and if this truth is accepted, obviously it cannot be allowed to evade the

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *Mind*, vol. xxix. p. 215.

problems of error and suffering and evil; but here again the very cruciality of these difficulties heightens the unity which surmounts and overrules them. Certainly if the whole were only static and passive, somewhat as a great work of art, free from deficiency and from excess, may be regarded as static, it would be impossible, except by unjustifiably insisting on their unreality, satisfactorily to account for pain and wrong. But the issue becomes more hopeful when we pass from the static aspects of the universe to its more fundamental eternally dynamic nature ; for then the contributory function of every real at once acquires still higher importance through its influence upon the final consummation.

There arises at this point what is perhaps the most difficult of all philosophical problems—that of finding the truest expression for the nature of reality as an ever active and dynamic process; and its difficulty consists in the necessity of uniting energy or force with mind or spirit. Different thinkers have adopted different terms wherein to unite these two fundamental concepts: Will—Life—Maya—Idea—even the Unconscious—not to include distinctively religious names for the ultimate reality; and if it were possible to summarise in any single phrase the long history of philosophic thought, it might perhaps best be described as consisting in the conflict or opposition between the ideas of substance and of subject—that is, of the basis of energy and change on the one hand, and of permanence and soul on the other. The intrepid genius of Spinoza cut the Gordian knot by assigning the two attributes of extension and thought to one infinite and divine Substance; and somewhat similarly the Hegelian Idea, at the conclusion of the dialectic, becomes

Nature; and perhaps their contrasted methods reflect the prophetic insight of the Hebrew and the laborious thoroughness of the Teuton. "Concealed under the apparently geometrical method (of Spinoza) there is an impassioned vision of the universe." [1] But always the tides of speculation have set now to one pole and again to the other; and the problems of time and development, the contrasts between subject and object, mind and body, materialism and idealism, are all subordinate phases of this ultimate antithesis.

The essential difficulty upon which they all centre arises then from our natural but superficial view of thought as being passive or stationary; while on the contrary we conceive—and seem compelled by the very nature of our experience thus to conceive—of force and energy as inhering in matter. This is indeed the later form that has been assumed by the concept, as the result of the expansion of scientific knowledge, rather than the mode under which the earliest European thought apprehended it. For the νοῦς, or reason, of Anaxagoras was essentially an active moving principle; while to Aristotle again it was the inner working—the ἐνέργεια—of mind which alone gave actuality to the mere potentiality possessed by body in itself. Their lack of scientific facts, however, altogether debarred the Greek thinkers from giving these fundamentally sound principles concrete application to actual phenomena; and once modern science obtained its firm basis in observation and experiment the inevitable result was to transfer energy completely to the physical realm. Certainly it constitutes even there an almost insoluble problem; nevertheless it can be accurately measured, and so traced without apparent

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 110.

loss throughout its protean transformations; while on the other hand its employment in psychology seems but to lead to further obscurity, so impregnated has the term now become with physical meaning. It is vain to seek to escape this difficulty by assuming, with Bergson,[1] some infinitesimal suspensions of the law of energy conservation; and at the present moment it appears quite impossible to obtain any satisfactory expression for the activity of thought in terms of energy, in spite of their indissoluble connection. The term has become the monopoly of the physicists; and to attempt to outflank their impregnable position by regarding scientific concepts as mere formulæ for calculation, or as in any similar sense unreal, is simply to sink back once more into the subjectivism of last century, already dealt with in the preceding chapter. Dr. Whitehead, who has already been cited, here again approaches the philosophy of nature as a physicist and vigorously criticises this attitude. "Do away," he urges, "with this elaborate machinery of a conceptual nature which consists of assertions about things which don't exist in order to convey truths about things which do exist. Scientific laws, if they are true, are statements about entities which we obtain knowledge of as being in nature"; and "nature," further, is "the nature which is before us in perceptual knowledge."[2]

It is, doubtless, comparatively easy for scientists thus to accept, with Dr. Whitehead, the reality of nature as perceived; for obviously if the natural world

[1] "When we consider the mechanism of voluntary movement, the functioning of the nervous system, and life itself in what is essential to it, we are led to the conclusion that the invariable contrivance of consciousness, from its most humble origin in elementary living forms, is . . . to elude the law of conservation of energy" (*Mind-Energy*, p. 35); and similarly, on life insinuating itself into matter, *Creative Evolution*, pp. 102-104, 139, 263.

[2] *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 45, 40.

were unreal almost all justification for their activity—like that of the poets—would at once vanish. But it has always been difficult, for one reason or another, for philosophers to regard the realm of natural phenomena as in any true sense real. Either its incessant change, or its association with transient and primitive sense-experience, or perhaps even a subconscious reflection of the mystical belief that earth and heaven "shall perish, shall wax old like a garment," has tempted them to seek ultimate reality in the sphere of the immaterial and the unextended. An able writer has wittily remarked that "Reality seemed to Shelley to suffer from an organic disease of which it must be miraculously cured before he could consent to it";[1] and similarly there have been philosophers who, one cannot help thinking, would have felt very much happier if there had been no external physical world at all. Reality, they would maintain, is something that is neither extended nor material; mere perception, therefore, can reveal nothing of it to us; and this extreme position must of course be distinguished from that more moderate view, which, while according—as we saw in discussing the Idealism of Hegel and Green—some measure of reality to the physical world, maintains at the same time that the universe disclosed to perception must be supplemented in many vitally important ways by the more penetrating insight of pure thought. But a fairly large modern school either agrees with Bergson that not knowledge of reality, but action, is the true aim of perception; or would, like Croce, deny reality to the outer world because it is

[1] Mr. Clutton-Brock, *Shelley*, p. 181. This refers, of course, to the poet's passion for social reform. The author of the "Hymn of Pan" and the "Ode to the West Wind" can surely have had no qualms.

not the revelation of artistic intuition or expression.[1] Similarly, in the past, perception was for Leibniz but a low or confused form of thinking. "The only real existences are the monads, which are purely spiritual non-spatial existences"; and "every material body," as thus apprehended by thought, "is essentially force or energy, activity of some kind."

In this way the contrast between energy and spirit is overcome by first regarding matter as identical with energy, and then resolving matter itself into its constitutive monads which, as monads, are spiritual and non-spatial. Thus the desired identity is certainly attained, but only through the abolition of matter and extension, as such. Activity—spiritual activity—then becomes the ultimately real. "Leibniz started philosophy on a better track by making activity, not substantiality or reality, the fundamental idea. *Quod non agit non existit.*"[2]

Further, as in the Kantian ontology, "space and time are not real substances nor attributes of real substances";[3] and somewhat similarly, the recent conclusions of the scientific Theory of Relativity have been interpreted by many thinkers as finally demonstrative evidence for some such subjectivity of these two entities. "The general principle," argues Dr. Wildon Carr, "is acknowledged to concern the most fundamental philosophical concepts of the nature of the

[1] Croce's own statements appear somewhat obscure; he regards external nature as not "a truly real reality, (but) a construction or abstraction of the intellect" (*Aesthetic*, p. 397). This position appears, however, to be wholly at variance with his acceptance of the ether and the atom as "true and proper philosophic efforts" (p. 50). But both his supporter Dr. Wildon Carr, and his critic Dr. Bosanquet, agree that he denies reality to the external world. *Cf. Mind*, vol. xxix. p. 208, and Croce's *Aesthetic*, p. 10.

[2] Professor Ward, *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xx. pp. 20, 21.

[3] Professor Latta, *Leibniz*, p. 101.

universe. The essence of it is to introduce subjectivism into physical science"; while Lord Haldane infers that "the character of space and time is purely relative, and so is their reality. (Einstein claims) to have deprived space and time of their supposed characters as self-subsistent and uniform frameworks of existence, belonging to an altogether non-mental world."[1] Such a position, however—although Lord Haldane expressly repudiates subjectivism — appears to be altogether untenable, and quite unjustified by the statements of the scientific investigators themselves. Dr. Cunningham definitely insists that "the principle is not a metaphysical doctrine based on the supposition that it is impossible to conceive of an absolute standard of position in space. Dynamical relativity is a different thing from a statement as to what is within the power of the mind to conceive about position or motion." Einstein, again, has stated that "there was nothing specially, certainly nothing intentionally, philosophical about" his investigations.[2]

The current philosophical misinterpretation of the scientific results appears to me to arise from a twofold confusion; first, between the physical nature of the entities which the new theory has shown to be relative, and their metaphysical character; and secondly, between space and time themselves, and our spatio-temporal systems of measurement. As regards the first point, the concepts or entities which are now denied to be "absolute" are regarded not as *metaphysically*, but as *physically*, "absolute." The "absolute time" of classical mechanics is absolute, not metaphysically, but as "independent of the position and the condition

[1] *Principle of Relativity*, p. 21. *Reign of Relativity*, pp. 88, 83.
[2] *Relativity and the Electron Theory*, pp. 2, 3. *Nature*, vol. 107, p. 504.

of motion of the system of co-ordinates." [1] The scientist is here concerned always with "physical conceptions"; his time is a "time interval," his space a "space interval (distance)," [2] and there can be no "absolute" scale of time-space measurement which is altogether independent of the phenomena under observation. Time and space (secondly) thus taken as "intervals" which constitute the units of measurement, cannot be thereupon identified without any further qualification with space and time in their philosophic aspects. Certainly the two are inseparably connected together within our experience; but they are not therefore identical; and we cannot pass directly from the physical entities to time and space in their philosophical significance.

As Dr. Bosanquet (among others) has expressed the view here advanced that "the moral of (scientific) relativity is not the permeation of the universe by mind or minds, but only a strong suggestion in that direction," [3] I may cite his presentation of "our primitive sense of time," to which our "primitive sense" of space is, in my opinion, analogous, and from which all the concepts which underlie our scientific methods of measurement are in due course developed. "When we seem to be waiting endlessly, what does clock-time matter? There is no time-experience more variable than this, and none more relative to its conditions. Certainly there is none more real. Uniform time does not supersede the personal experience of duration. The latter persists by the side of the standard time." [4]

[1] Einstein, *The Theory of Relativity*, p. 56.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 19, 30. "It would be wrong to associate any metaphysical speculations with the introduction of the four-dimensional point of view" (Schlick, *Space and Time*, p. 51).

[3] *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 16.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 152, 153. *Cf.* the same author's *Logic*, vol. i. p. 257.

Similarly for Hegel " time and space are the object of sense." [1]

Scientific relativity therefore is concerned with entities and conditions that are purely physical; philosophic relativity (on the other hand) with the relations between mind and its content, or between mind and reality; and before the two theories can be identified, in the sense that the scientific becomes a contribution to the truth of any form of philosophic subjectivism, it must be shown that the physical, as such, is subjective. All the recent developments form a natural (physical) result of the finite velocity of light; " we have not taken account of the inaccuracy involved by the finiteness of the velocity of light." [2] Apart from its further exactitude, therefore, scientific relativity has no greater philosophic importance than had the transition from the " moons " whereby our savage ancestors reckoned to our calendar months. Mind is not active in any way that is unique when our observations conform to the principles of scientific relativity, and this theory in itself can confer no original status on mind which it did not possess before. The philosophic issue in its essentials is quite unaffected; which does not imply, of course, that the theory has no scientific value; it simply means that its philosophical implications have not been correctly apprehended and applied; philosophically, it is a benevolent neutral.

But among recent great thinkers it is Lotze who has most fully developed this presentation of reality as immaterial; and much of his *Metaphysic* is devoted to the

[1] *Logic*, sec. 19.

[2] Einstein, *Theory of Relativity*, p. 10. *Cf.* the discussion of this subject in *Mind*, vol. xxxi.; and *Sidelights on Relativity* (Einstein).

systematic theory of a real but non-spatial world. He regards "a system of relations between the realities, unspatial, inaccessible to perception, and purely intelligible, as the fact which lies at the root of our spatial perceptions. When these objective relations are translated into the subjective language of our consciousness, each finds its counterpart in one definite spatial image. Every particular feature of our spatial perceptions corresponds to a ground which there is for it in the world of things"; and between this objectively real system, and perceived space, "there exists no resemblance. . . . From this non-spatial material the soul has to re-create entirely afresh the spatial image that has disappeared." [1]

As Dr. Dawes Hicks has pointed out, Lotze is here developing a view already adopted by Plato,[2] whose myth of the prisoners in the cave is immortal. But Lotze's modern theory appears, upon a detailed analysis, to be inextricably involved in obscurities and self-contradictions. The spatial image which is produced in perception consists, according to Lotze's theory, "in a number of excitations of nervous points"; and this at once raises the question "how this fact of nerve-excitation becomes an object of knowledge for the soul." But this is a radical misstatement of the actual process of perception. Certainly each spatial image is connected with nervous excitations; but the image itself is one thing, the excitation another; the image is not the excitation, which is, as such, an imperceptible molecular activity. The nervous changes, as conceived by science, have here been confused with

[1] *Metaphysic*, vol. i. pp. 263, 258; vol. ii. p. 252.

[2] *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xiv. p. 18. *Cf.* also R. K. Gaye, *Platonic Conception of Immortality*, p. 189.

the image which is perceived in vision; and these changes are next regarded as undergoing "the transition to consciousness." But since consciousness is non-spatial, their spatiality must now be dispensed with, and so "the continuation of the process consists in the production of an idea—the idea of a space"; and this "for unknown reasons." Thus the soul recreates both the idea of space and the spatial image that has once existed but has disappeared.[1]

Throughout the whole theory, then, we find one attribute added to another supposititiously and for "unknown reasons," in a manner which recalls the older conception of a "pre-established harmony" in itself inexplicable. The resultant obscurity is the penalty for abandoning, merely for the convenience of argument, Lotze's initial principle of the non-spatiality of reality; and the general sense of dissatisfaction aroused by this type of hypothesis is evidenced by the recent marked advance of philosophic and scientific realism. Any final solution of the problem, however, must lie in the perhaps far-distant future, and to it every great system will contribute its own characteristic elements. The most promising line of thought may lie along some such combination of ancient and modern speculation as is given by Wallace in his elucidation of Aristotle and Hegel:—"In Aristotle there is the general assumption of teleology in a united universe. The world is all an ordered and co-operant unity. In the Aristotelian realm of nature lives a principle quasi-intelligent and quasi-volitional. Nature is struggling towards greater perfection. Movement is not mere locomotion, but

[1] *Metaphysic*, vol. ii. pp. 249, 252, 273. *Cf.* further *The Monist*, vol. xxix. p. 579.

is the path of self-realisation." [1] But to the Greek mind, despite its marvellous insight, the operation of natural law was a sealed volume; while in our own day its mechanical necessity has constituted for many thinkers an insuperable obstacle to the reality of freedom. The solution of this fundamental difficulty, as I have already endeavoured to show, lies in the inherent connection which subsists between these apparently antithetic concepts, and which (again to quote Wallace) is expressed, as a general principle, in the Hegelian philosophy: "Hegel knew that the supreme *νοῦς* never works without the instrumentality of machinery, and that final causes never supersede, but only complete, the laws of mechanical causation. Each later category has to keep—transmuted and adjusted—the earlier, not leaving them behind." [2]

[1] *Lectures*, pp. 33, 34. [2] *Ibid.* p. 563.

XX

THE ULTIMATE BASIS OF VALUE

In the light of the preceding discussion of the character of knowledge and of reality, the consideration of value must be resumed from the position attained at the conclusion of Chapter XVII. It was there maintained that the essential characteristic of value, as objectively real, is contributoriness to the completeness of some mode or other of organisation or system; and that this further involves, when taken in conjunction with the course of actual experience, the conception of an all-embracing and interrelated Whole. Value, as thus regarded, confirms the implications of the other principal modes of experience; of Art, as being inexhaustible in its content and modes of expression; of Religion, implicitly basing itself upon the concept of Perfection; and of Science, which also partly implicitly, but still more and more explicitly, reveals a systematic unity beneath and within all perceived phenomena. "All thought is a process of relating or rather of seeing things in their relations. In science it is the search for the universal law or principle which is manifested in particular properties of things. It thus always presupposes in its object *the existence of a real whole* of systematically related parts which is the

source alike of the being of the particular facts and of our knowledge of them." [1]

In consonance again with the recent reaction against subjectivism, the World of perception has been accepted as real "in its own right," to apply Dr. Bosanquet's expression; subject, however, to the Idealistic principle that "its own right" is only derivative, and secondary to the fuller reality of the "system of Reason." [2] Finally, the more a system attains the standard of a true Whole, the more does it exhibit freedom—but in its only real form as self-determination.[3]

When therefore we pursue to the fullest extent these ramifying implications, we discover that no finite real whatever is in itself complete; and so far as it possesses value it must contribute in nature and function to some system or individual more inclusive than itself. Taken alone, it determines (in its degree) the value of all its constituent elements; but not its own value; for that depends, similarly, upon the part it fulfils within some wider scheme. Carrying this principle to its logical conclusion, it follows that it is only the self-determining Whole, thus dynamically realising itself in modes that are fundamentally one in spite of their diversity, that can constitute the ultimate standard of completeness and—in some general sense of the word—of perfection. The legitimacy of the latter term may certainly be questioned on several grounds. It may be said that its identification in this way with completeness is far too summary; or again, that wherever its use is really justified—wherever, *i.e.*,

[1] *Life of Edward Caird*, p. 336.
[2] *Cf.* Chap. V. on the Platonic and Hegelian Idea.
[3] *Cf.* p. 113.

there actually exists, on however limited a scale, anything truly perfect—then its nature seems either to be foreign to that of the universe at large, or even, further, positively antagonistic to it and only to be maintained against its hostile and destructive influences with difficulty and struggle. That this holds true of artistic or social or moral worth—not to say perfection—may appear obvious; so that the concept of any higher and more inclusive ideal, real though not yet realised in actual experience, seems an empty and chimerical fancy.

Nevertheless this obviousness arises from limitations of experience which modern Philosophy has ample grounds for disregarding—or, perhaps better, for re-interpreting; and in so doing the ultimate nature of value, considered of course in its relation not to subjective satisfaction but to objective completeness, assumes a double aspect as at once originating from, and contributing to, the self-determining Whole. For, whatever be the full nature of the Whole in itself, it is at least the only possible source of all that perfection that we actually do recognise as real, whether this be natural or the result of our purposive effort. Nothing that is real can be conceived to escape from the universal fabric of interconnection whose warp and woof we may, if we choose, analyse into causes and effects; although these products of our disjunction can never be maintained in their isolation, but must always fall back within some more integral process; and to this principle even reason, emotion, and will form no exceptions. Whatever conception we may form of the world's earlier phases of development, it must remain an always adequate and relevant basis for its present content. "Biologists tell us that all the

universe has been at work preparing for the golden daffodils. They are engaged in exhibiting the affinity of the daffodils to the life that went before and came after them. The biological world is one wondrous whole." [1] The real ground—which it is of course impossible for us to envisage in its actuality, but apart from which any assigned sphere of causation is admittedly inadequate—the ultimate ground of any selected total phase in the world's development lies in its earlier history taken as a whole.[2] It may be true that the terms "earlier" and "later" are altogether out of place here, and that time, as such, is not a real factor in universal development, either because it is in itself nothing more than appearance, or because it is an element inseparable from a space-time or other form of continuum, as Professor Alexander has maintained from the philosophic standpoint, and the relativists from that of science; none the less must development assume for our thought its insuppressible temporal aspects. But these problems, difficult though they are, are after all secondary to the still more fundamental principle of continuity, which demands an unimpaired *dynamic* "continuum," of which indeed the spatio-temporal complex may be only one abstract aspect which must be supplemented by others innumerable, somewhat as the thought and extension of Spinoza were but two

[1] *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 148. Sir Henry Jones has given this principle marked emphasis.

[2] Dr. Whitehead has elaborated a similar idea, for his special purpose and with appropriate terminology, in *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 53 f. "A certain whole of nature limited only by the property of being a simultaneity" he calls a "duration." "A duration is a definite natural entity, (not) a mere abstract stretch of time, (but) a concrete slab of nature limited by simultaneity. It is an exhibition of the process of nature that each duration happens and passes. Durations have all the reality that nature has." If I may somewhat expand this view, I mean that every "duration"—every "slab of reality"—must be, so far as it is causal, adequate to account for all succeeding durations.

out of an infinity of attributes.[1] Here there comes to light a defect in the idea of evolution, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say in the common interpretation of this idea. For it is very often taken to imply that the initial stages of any long course of change are simpler than the later stages. In one sense this is undeniable; but it is easily possible unduly to limit the phenomena so as to cut them off too sharply from the developing Whole; and then unless this is accorded an adequate continuity, the very basis of the evolutionary ascent itself vanishes.

But, fortunately for Idealism, all these difficulties have undoubtedly been appreciably relieved by recent developments of purely scientific theory which afford marked support to the concept of the Whole, as such; for this advance has overcome to a high degree, even if only in its more abstract phases, the serious obstacles hitherto presented by temporal changes and development. It has now become possible, not only without error, but with a positive gain in truth and precision, for phenomena which are presented in actual experience as serial and dynamic[2] to be regarded as timeless; and thus a sequence of changes, of which

[1] It is necessary to note that the "space" of the relativist is far from being identical with mere extension. "Space is endowed with physical qualities" (Einstein, *Sidelights on Relativity*, p. 23). Hence "an exact specification of the geometry of a region of space and time will determine all the mechanical properties existing in the region"—or even, according to Weyl's later theory, the electro-magnetic properties also (Professor Eddington, *Nature*, vol. 109, p. 635). In this way physical attributes are expressed or symbolised by the relativist geometry of the "space-time continuum," which thus becomes dynamic, or at the least kinematic, and not merely extensional and temporal.

[2] If the physical concept of force is to be dispensed with, it would be more accurate to say kinematic instead of dynamic. Recent developments of relativity certainly appear to tend to substitute motion for force; but it must be remembered that relativity deals after all with only abstract aspects of real changes. Lord Haldane's recent statement that "the notion of force had lost meaning for physicists" (*Reign of Relativity*, p. 89) seems too extreme. Dr. Campbell maintains that force is fundamental; and Einstein's references to force are frequent and significant.

the earliest cease with the appearance of the later, may be presented to investigation as one persistent and static system.

The use of graphs—in themselves timeless geometrical representations — to express changes and processes which are in reality essentially temporal, is a familiar method; and it now enables us to apprehend the modern mathematician's conception of the space-time continuum as something within which "motional phenomena become timeless phenomena in four-dimensional space, and the complete history of a physical system is laid out as a characteristic whole." [1] "A universe of determinate relations," to continue our citation of this writer, "in which everything proceeds according to known laws, is one which may be surveyed as a great whole in which past, present, and future are one. It is a four-dimensional unity, and for Einstein any plane section through it could be the present. The (temporal) history of a particle is a simple chain of points in that whole, a world-line." [2]

All this is strikingly suggestive, and helpful to a very high degree; this is the case even if we admit the objection that it can, at its best, apply only to the physical universe. For it is, after all, only the most superficial thought that seeks to disparage the "physical" as such, or would depreciate in any serious sense the "merely mechanical." The physical world, as it reveals itself more and more fully to the research of modern science, is seen more and more to be replete with mystery and marvel. It appears to suggest,

[1] Dr. E. Cunningham, *The Principle of Relativity*, p. 191. *Cf.* also p. 157: "three-dimensional kinematics become four-dimensional statics"; which is merely the more technical expression of the same principle.

[2] *Nature*, vol. 106, p. 786.

almost irresistibly, the existence of a Mind to whom the problems which baffle the ablest human intellects are as simple as the child's plans for his toy castles. The human mind, in scientific investigation, is coming increasingly to apprehend Nature no longer merely as a body of phenomena to be observed and described (though that is much), but rather as a complex system of problems to be solved. Observation and description, the methods of early science, are being supplemented more and more by calculation and by thought; and this advance is extremely significant—more so than appears to be realised even by those most closely concerned in the labour involved. Higher powers of the mind are being called upon and brought into activity. Knowledge is not merely expanding in its volume; it is deepening in its nature. It is no longer sufficient for it to be accurate; it must also be rational. Instead of correspondence to a world apparently external to itself, it must acquire a logical coherence which is essentially internal, and characteristic equally of itself and of its world; contingency, in other words, is giving place to necessity. The problems which it faces are not merely its own artificial creation; they spring out of the depths of Reality; and even while they arise from the mind's limitations, they witness to its capacity and power. To such a Reality, therefore, there can be nothing that is necessarily alien in a Mind for whom all its problems are already solved, or which indeed generated that Reality endowed with a nature which to itself presents no problems whatever. At this stage all distinction between Reality and Mind necessarily vanishes. Reality is Mind, and Mind is Reality. The real is the rational, the rational is the real. "The ideal of Knowledge—that the object

should be one with the self that knows it," [1] would have been attained.

Although this is here advanced as nothing more than a suggestion, it must be emphasised that the development of knowledge appears to be taking a course that is remarkably in consonance with it. "Modern science offers detailed verification of belief in rationality as the nature of things." [2] "We are endlessly discovering the rationality of the universe under forms that we could never have ourselves imagined, much less instituted." [3] The idealistic conception of the Whole thus finds—even if only in its more abstract aspects—a firm basis in other regions of thought and of exact knowledge; and to say the least, it has now become increasingly difficult to charge it with any inherent logical contradiction. "Such words as 'whole' and 'system' are good ones, and science evidently means to make good use of them." [4]

But in thus constituting the ultimate standard of completeness, the Whole—implied, as we have seen, by every form of experience alike—must be at the same time the ultimate criterion of value. For as considered, in the first place, from the standpoint of origin, the ultimate basis of every element of value lies in the whole which expresses and realises itself therein; which has both given it being in itself, and has generated the environment within which it acts. Further, value consists in contributoriness to completeness; therefore in respect also to its nature or function the Whole must form the true and final standard of

[1] E. Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. i. p. 370.

[2] Dr. Bosanquet, *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 74. The author adds philosophy to science, and morality to rationality.

[3] Professor Boyce Gibson, *Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 151.

[4] Dr. Bosanquet, *op. cit.* p. 156 (*cf.* p. 54, *ante*, note 3).

value. For what is really subserved in the end is the fuller being of the Whole; or, at the least, its maintenance; but since the Whole is essentially dynamic, its maintenance can never be reduced to anything merely static; it must rather always imply development.

For although it is always, in conformity with the systematic organisation of Reality, within some one concrete individual system that every element holds its due place, on the other hand it is also through this —its immediately inclusive system—that every factor finds its connection with the Whole. In its scientific aspect Dr. Whitehead has given this principle, as we have seen, a degree of precision that will appear too refined only to a superficial view of the issues involved. "The conception which most fully expresses the character of nature is that of each event as modified by the ingression of each electron into nature. The ether is the expression of this systematic modification of events throughout space and throughout time." [1]

In this passage an "event" is a strictly scientific concept; but apart from that limitation, in itself of course absolutely justified, Dr. Whitehead's standpoint is identical with the philosophic principle of the Whole; for we find here both systematic dynamic interconnection (revealing itself as "modification") and universality—"throughout space and time." Those limited combinations with which our finite powers must necessarily always be concerned are, equally for the scientist and the philosopher, subordinate to the Whole, whose reality they maintain equally by their

[1] *The Concept of Nature*, p. 160. It must be remembered that the existence of the ether is now maintained by Einstein. "Space is endowed with physical properties; in this sense there exists an ether" (*Sidelights on Relativity*, p. 23).

individual permanence as by their absorption within some fuller phase of its development. This principle is of course in no sense new; it is on the contrary one of the basal truths of Idealism. It is expressed by Hegel: "Everything which, taken apart, is narrow and restricted, receives its value by its connection with the whole, and by forming an organic element of the idea."[1] More succinctly by Mr. Bradley: "The world of reality is the world of values";[2] and again by Dr. Bosanquet: "The whole is single and primary, the source and standard of value, and part-values are to be reckoned as determined by the character of contributoriness to it. You do not value it; you value all else by it";[3] and the highest value thus becomes the fullest measure of contribution.

But this presentation of the ultimate "source and standard of value" is not the primary purpose of the present enquiry; it is secondary to the more specific problem of the nature of obligation in its moral sense. The first of the two phases of the subject which were distinguished at the conclusion of Chapter XIII.—the determination of the ultimate criterion of value—has here been dealt with, although no more has been done than possibly to advance somewhat new considerations to its elucidation. It remains therefore to consider its bearing upon the ultimate ground of moral obligation.

[1] *Logic* (Wallace), sec. 237; the "idea" once more, as essentially objective, not as a subjective process.

[2] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 64.

[3] *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, pp. 303, 310.

XXI

REALITY AS ABSOLUTE AND WHOLE

The consciousness of moral obligation discloses to analysis a markedly paradoxical character. The felt imperativeness which seems peculiarly its own is equally an attribute of some forms of desire, and yet the two types become, at a certain stage, directly opposed to each other. The imperiousness of desire, again, seems to rise solely from ourselves, while moral commands appear to come to us from without and to be as it were something foreign to us. Still we feel that the moral claim upon us is indefeasible, so that we are really ourselves only in recognising and obeying it; and in the end its purpose may become the main object of desire itself. Added to this there is the contradiction between moral freedom and moral necessity. "The moral convictions of man, the moral world, can be established only on the basis of both necessary law and freedom, and of both reconciled within the moral agent." [1]

The dilemma that the reconciliation must be effected "within the moral agent" himself is in no degree relieved, but only assumes a different form, if it is expressed as a discord between two selves or between two types or levels of self. This view ignores the

[1] Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 137.

essential unity of selfhood; a unity that is, like that of every other real, never mere uniformity but always a diversity—an identity in and through differences. Nor again can it be presented as due to the contrast between reason and feeling. For although moral ideals must possess a rational basis, still desires may also be rationalised, and duties on the other hand may become indissolubly one with feeling. It is easily conceivable that the only form of obligation should be that of desire, the only difficulty that of harmonising incompatible satisfactions; this is the situation that confronts behaviour that is intelligent but non-moral. The antithesis between moral freedom and moral obligation, on the other hand, forms the crux of the philosophical problem; the moral realm is the sphere of a conflict which, while essentially practical, at the same time falls to philosophy for analysis and rationalisation.

Here there arises a difficulty that is fundamental—that of the possibility of real conflict within a true Whole; a difficulty which obviously goes deeper than those already referred to as arising from time, change and development. Thus far my argument may be summarised in the three principles — (first) that as individual and social development proceed action comes to be freely directed more and more towards the acquiring and the maintenance of objective value; (secondly) that objective value consists in completeness or perfection, or the means thereto; and finally, that the ultimate standard of completeness, and therefore the ultimate criterion of value also, is the dynamic nature and process of the universe as a whole. But assuming that these results may be accepted, how then is it possible to maintain both the reality of moral obligation, imply-

ing as it does an inherent contradiction, and the reality of a whole? To continue our quotation from Sir Henry Jones, "We cannot maintain that man's character and actions have any moral qualities, unless he is *at once* essentially related to and continuous with the world and subject to law, and also free—his will genuinely sovereign." How, that is, is such opposition compatible with the being of a true whole? Does it not involve, in the end, an *absolute* spiritual pluralism?[1] and does not the concept of a whole which includes within itself such opposition and conflict yield an insoluble antinomy?

It must be noted that while experience remains entirely or mainly at the level of desire[2] this question does not arise. For desires themselves fall quite naturally, as modes of consciousness, within the development of the whole; while internal strife and discord, on the other hand, are essentials of the moral situation. Either then these characters must be dispensed with, in which case the moral problem at once vanishes, and nothing is left that merits enquiry; on the other hand, if they are retained it seems impossible to uphold the reality of a true whole.

This is, I think, the philosophic aspect of a controversy which, under the form of the problems of pain and error and evil, is as old as thought. But the philosophic problem takes the form, from the standpoint of ethical theory, of reconciling the actuality of moral obligation — which it is essential to remember necessarily implies an equally actual moral freedom—

[1] Current pluralism, as I have already argued, is always relative to an underlying monism.

[2] Desire must, of course, always be regarded as indissolubly connected with the action which results from it, and never taken as merely passive; but to repeat this explicitly throughout would be tedious.

with the nature of the Whole. But before considering this subject, a brief digression on the terms employed may be helpful.

First then as to the term Whole itself. Here the difficulties are obvious. The nature assigned to the Whole must be such that time, development, dynamic process and change, potentiality and purpose, must all find their due place therein as being its real and not its fictitious or merely conceptual elements or aspects. It would, however, be quite legitimate to call these "apparent," if by "appearance" we always mean partial or limited reality; if, in other words, we apply the principle of degrees or levels of reality. For from that point of view "every object of thought is real, and every object of thought is transcendent of immediate experience."[1] "Degrees of reality are stages in comprehensiveness. The more real an object is the more are the ways of its interdependence upon other facts."[2] It is then neither necessary nor legitimate to regard them, as so many great thinkers do and have done, as only phenomenal, while reality itself is a "noumenon" which possesses none of the characters which enter into human experience or knowledge. As against this attitude it would be truer to accept Bergson's contention, faulty and ill-founded though it is as he has presented it, that reality is exhaustless, self-transcendent, absolutely free from its own past and always creatively developing. That reality is eternally creative is, indeed, an essential principle of Idealism that has been emphasised long in advance of Bergson himself.

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *Meeting of Extremes*, p. 145.

[2] Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 166. *Cf.* Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 293.

"Creation," says Wallace, "is incessant and perpetual; the world is ever in the making. Still, now as of old, each birth is a creation"; and similarly, "everywhere the world is in the making. Its reality consists in the making." "The Idea is an eternal creation, eternal vitality."[1] But, as I have already pointed out, all these problems are proving not to be so absolutely insoluble as they have hitherto been taken to be; and perhaps I have said sufficient with reference to the attitude—or indeed the postulates—of scientific investigation, and also the logical implications of philosophical pluralism, to elucidate the concept of the universe as one interconnected and organised dynamic system whose potentiality is, nevertheless, inexhaustible. If such ideas as those of a mere summation, totality, series or continuum are excluded because they express only certain abstract aspects of such a system, the conception should present little difficulty. These subordinate phases are indeed very largely the outcome of modern scientific theory; and as aspects they are of course both real and extremely valuable; just as, *e.g.*, the statistics of the census yield information which is indispensable, but which none the less falls very far short of expressing the full character of social life and structure. But in its origin the word "whole" connoted a certain degree at least of soundness or perfection, as in the old English expression "They that be whole need not a physician"; which implies, of course, some basis of organic or systematic interconnection and structure.

When we turn again to the infinite diversity of concrete reality, wholeness is seen to imply a necessary

[1] *Lectures on Natural Theology*, pp. 142, 109. *Life of Edward Caird*, pp. 353, 354. Hegel, *Logic*, sec. 214.

unity which underlies, but does not suppress nor destroy, this diversity. Thus every element, in accord with the principle of degrees of reality, has some measure of *real* existence, but not *independent* existence. Its reality, that is, must never be interpreted to mean its absolute isolation. In being what it is it expresses, in its manner and degree, the nature of the whole; and conversely the whole manifests itself, alike though not equally, in each of its constituents; as *e.g.* energy exhibits itself throughout one series of diverse changes, life throughout another and mind in a third.

This is a fundamental consideration which is very often quite inadequately apprehended. It means much more than that a certain quantum of energy is found in every physical phenomenon, or that some specific mode of life animates every organism. What is really implied is that behind—though not within—every such phenomenon lies the *whole* of universal energy; as has been seen, this is emphatically expressed by Dr. Whitehead. Similarly there is active behind every organism — though not exhaustively present in it—the *whole* realm of life; or of course, if we choose to trace the connection back still further, once more the whole of Energy. But these are after all no more than analogies; nothing that falls within finite experience can ever express the full being of the whole, for that could be apprehended only by an experience like itself infinite; or, more truly, could be apprehended only by itself; and then the ideal would be attained " that the object should be one with the self that knows it." At this stage language becomes inadequate to express the truth; it can grasp at best nothing more than some approximation thereto.

Proceeding further to the dynamic activity of the

world thus conceived in its unified diversity, we apprehend it as—not *un*conditioned but—*self*-conditioning. Its change, or life, or evolution—whatever term indeed we may select as most fitting—proceeds from itself, or, more adequately expressed, is itself; and thus we attain the fuller notion of its self-completeness,[1]—perfection—absoluteness. It is unfortunate that these last terms have fallen somewhat into disfavour, partly through that subtle alteration in meaning which words inevitably undergo in the course of their history; and properly to grasp their modern philosophic import it is necessary to recall—as in the case of "whole"—their earlier significance. Thus the word "perfection" implies not so much any earthly excellence, but rather the Divine perfection of which theologians still speak, although perhaps in a less certain tone than did their more dogmatic predecessors; this gives us, certainly not the content, but the sense and tendency of the word. But it is in the sphere of art that the term has deepest significance. "The world to Shelley is illuminated by the light of a glorious power. It is the realised perfection of everything good and beautiful on earth; or, in other words, all such goodness and beauty is its partial manifestation. . . . . This all-embracing perfection cannot be expressed in poetic words or words of any kind, nor yet in music or in colour. It is a spirit. It will not speak at our bidding, nor answer in our language. It is not our servant; it is our master."[2] And similarly the word "absolute" implies, not illogical arbitrariness, much less abstract emptiness, but rather self-completeness, plenary independence, self-adequacy.

[1] *Cf.* Dr. Bosanquet, *Meeting of Extremes*, p. 215.

[2] Professor A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, pp. 152, 26, 27.

This its true meaning is perhaps best seen in the familiar political idea of absolute monarchy; and it may in fact be the case that the repugnance which the word so often arouses is due to the way in which rulers have misinterpreted their theoretic "absolute" status and misused their "absolute" power. Still the idea, in itself, is neither obsolete nor invalid; we employ its exact equivalent "plenipotentiary," and many political thinkers would accord absolute power, not now to the personal sovereign, but to the ideal state. In science, again, it is very frequently used, and again in its original sense of completeness or finality; we find "absolute alcohol," "absolute zero," "absolute temperature"; nor has scientific relativity dispensed (as is too often supposed) with the concept; for in any given system of reference its own time system—its "proper time" or *Eigenzeit*—is unvarying, and in that sense absolute. "We may remark," says a writer in *Nature*, "that the absolute is not abolished by the principle. Things like energy and the velocity of light are independent, and remain as absolute as ever they were," [1] and Professor Eddington, whose general position here is markedly subjectivist, posits "an absolute condition of the World." [2] Similarly, but still more in consonance with the philosophic spirit proper, Sir Oliver Lodge has given a timely warning to speculative thinkers: "Notwithstanding any temptation to idolatry, a physicist is bound to return to his right mind; he must cease to be influenced unduly by . . . geometrical devices and weirdly ingenious modes of expression. Beneath and above and around all Appearances there exists a universe of full-bodied, concrete, absolute, Reality." [3]

[1] *Nature*, vol. 106, p. 781. [2] *Mind*, vol. xxx. p. 151. [3] *Nature*, *loc. cit.* p. 800.

From this point of view, then, Reality is the dynamic Whole, determined and conditioned solely by itself, and therefore the Absolute; and as it would be very difficult to dispense with the term, and as the phrase "moral absolute" is in general use, I shall employ it only with this meaning, and not as implying either abstract uniformity, or, as in the bad sense of absolute government, capricious arbitrariness. "The true Absolute is not the emptiest and most meagre of abstractions—what is left as a residual after the relative has been cut out of it; it is the concretest of all being, the whole which includes without destroying all partial aspects." [1]

[1] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, pp. 295, 296.

XXII

REASON, VALUE AND PERSONALITY

The Whole—the One—the Absolute, then, are terms each of which expresses the nature of Reality from a distinctive standpoint; and it is a corollary of fundamental importance that change—process—development—is everywhere the activity of the Whole, although at the same time it is, as such, ever beyond finite experience, which can know it only under those separate subdivisions which form the subject-matter of the various cultures and sciences. Further, the conception of the Unity of Reality necessitates that even such opposition and contradictions as appear to be radical and persistent must themselves arise out of the nature of the Whole; so that to explain them—even if only to explain them away—we must trace their origin to Reality itself; and again, since any distinction between noumenal and phenomenal has been discarded, to Reality as this appears to experience, but only at its highest and fullest. "Philosophy must endeavour to do with one, all-inclusive, real world, and to make that real world active even in our knowing and willing, yea, even in our illusions and wrong-doing."[1] Once more we may turn to Professor Bradley's suggestion that for Shelley "the perfection

[1] *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 162.

which poetry is to exhibit includes . . . qualities which are capable of becoming the instruments of evil. The energy, power and passion of the soul, though they may be perverted, are in themselves elements of perfection; and so even in their perversion or combination with moral deformity, they retain their value." [1]

At this stage it becomes essential to recall all that has been said in preceding chapters on the subject of determination. The meaning of that term, and all its various forms and applications, now require to be focussed upon the nature of the Whole as thus expressed, and upon the problem of moral obligation. In the first place, the continuous manifestation of the immanent activity of Reality under its many definite and precise modes is best described, as has been argued, by the word determination; and whether we then regard it as the determination of part by part—as in causal sequences—or of the part by the Whole, is a matter not of principle but of convenience and point of view.

When we choose the first of these methods, it will be remembered that the measure of our success depends on the degree to which the necessary analysis of the total complex of phenomena can be carried forward; and this analysis, further, may on due occasion be supplemented by an adequate re-synthesis of the elements that have been discriminated. The result of this procedure is always the attainment of that precision which characterises exact science—of the exactitude which lies at the root of all logical and mathematical truth; and which is further evidenced

[1] *Oxford Lectures*, p. 165. *Cf.* Dr. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 350.

by the progressive application of the more abstract sciences, partially or completely, to the more concrete; *e.g.* by the physico-chemical theories of biological phenomena and the psychological analysis of social change. But it is a radical misconception of these inevitable developments of knowledge to regard them as any "reduction" of the higher to the lower; if we must adopt this form of expression it would be truer to speak of the subsumption of the lower under the higher; for Life and Mind would remain what they are even if every sequence could be adequately described in chemical or psychological terms; and what is real is not the mediate results of analysis but only the final synthesis and dynamic system. The so-called "reduction," therefore, is really only the exact formulation of the interconnections which maintain both the internal organisation and the external response of the system as such, apart from which they are meaningless.

It necessarily follows, therefore, as has indeed been argued already when considering the true nature of cause and effect, that determination is, always and everywhere, ultimately determination by the Whole; and when we proceed a stage further and recall what has been said with reference to *self*-determination, we find that the increasing degree in which this attribute becomes manifested in the world has a dual aspect; for, when regarded in its truest significance, it constitutes both the advancing evolution of Reality, and the measure of the "freedom" of its individual and always active sub-systems. These two characters are always inseparably united together—each implies the other. The greater, that is, their capacity for self-determination, the higher is the level of their nature and being; the nearer does this approach to that of

the Whole itself, and the more developed is their real freedom of action; and all these characteristics obviously attain their fullest fruition, for concrete experience, in Personality, both in its individual and collective forms of expression.

If now we consider the simplest grades of existence, we find that at those levels where self-determination is scarcely, if at all, perceptible, the phenomena in their detail—so far as they are at all distinct from the systems in their entirety—present little difficulty to thought, whose task is to trace the exact connection of the cause to its effect; and when this has been done the mode in which the Whole, as manifested in those specific phenomena, there conditions its own development has been finally ascertained. But with the appearance and the continuous advance in the degree of self-determination—which (as we have seen) marks the evolution of reality—there arises for thought an entirely new problem—that, namely, of relating the free activity of each entity, thus become relatively independent, with the universal determination of the absolute Whole. For this still remains the only truly real self-determination; but since its reality in no way suppresses any of the subordinate forms, but rather (in principle) expresses itself through these, there must exist in the case of every highly developed grade of being—and therefore in personality—two distinct phases or categories of self-determination, which are equally real, but not *equally fully* real; and the general philosophical problem—of which the ethical is one cardinal form—then becomes that of the principle of their relation and interaction. For it is essential to notice that the ethical sphere has close analogies, which present to speculation all those difficulties which arise

from the relations between the subordinate categories themselves; as *e.g.* of Life to Mind, or of both to Society or to Matter.

In so far as the distinctively ethical problem is directly concerned, it now becomes necessary to pursue the bearing of all these considerations on personality, both internally as character and externally as action. In the first place, to express in definite detail the character of the self-determination of the Whole is plainly impossible, because it transcends all modes of finite comprehension. Even mystical experience must be judged inadequate, if not in itself, at least so far as it attempts explicitly to express its own content. For mystic moods, at their deepest, ever flow

> As rivers seek a sea they cannot fill
> But are themselves filled full in its embrace,
> Absorbed, at rest, each river and each rill.

And however much it may admire and envy, still "philosophy has no right to avail itself of the methods of mysticism."[1] At the same time the highest form of self-determination we know is exhibited in personality; and personality must be regarded as a system[2] of unified activities which, while governed (in principle) by some essentially rational content, has reached its present stage of development by means of the progressive rationalisation of primitive impulse and desire; and this governing rational content passes through the advancing levels of subjective satisfaction, value and objective completeness. Further, as a necessary result of these conditions of its growth, this content finally exhibits two distinct aspects, each of

[1] *Filled Full* (Christina Rossetti). *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 157.

[2] On the use of "system" in this connection, *cf.* p. 54, *ante*, note 3.

which taken alone is merely abstract, and which in real existence are inseparably united. First, in its purely rational aspect it constitutes a concept or idea; but secondly, as always positing the goal of action, it is also an end or ideal; and thus for self-determined action—*i.e.* for personal freedom—the constant and concrete coalescence of these two phases becomes essential. Again, disregarding the subjective category of mere satisfaction, this concept of objective value or of completeness may at any particular moment take any one of a series of extremely diverse forms. But despite the endless multiplicity of these modes, they are always to some degree classified; although it doubtless remains true that within actual experience their classification is mainly practical and unsystematic. When, however, we seek the true logical basis of all our categories of value we find—as I have endeavoured to show in Chapter XX.—that they inevitably imply and culminate in that supreme value or perfection of the Whole, of which, as at once their primal origin and final standard, they are themselves never anything more than subordinate and transitory aspects; and once this dominant and inclusive concept has been apprehended—in form though never in full detail—it at once becomes incumbent upon reason, from its very nature as reason, to erect it into the supreme and final determinant of all action. This forms, therefore, the ultimate logical consummation of the rational self-determination of personality.

So universal and intimate a connection, however, between any deliverance of reason, as such, and the world of action may appear to be extremely questionable. It becomes therefore all-important at this point to recognise the true place of reason within the

whole of experience. Too often reason is regarded as isolated—as fulfilling its distinctive functions in a wholly abstract sphere which has but the slightest connection with practice; or again as always analytic or critical rather than constructive. This view is believed to be implied by the Kantian dichotomy between the Pure and the Practical Reason with their contrasted spheres of activity and content. But in spite of all that is to be said in favour of this division it still remains a division within Reason itself; in both realms alike Reason is operative, even if its modes are divergent. "Reason practical must be identical at bottom with reason theoretical." [1] It is necessary, therefore, to recall what has already been emphasised—that "rationality, having originated in the most intimate connection with action, maintains its relation thereto throughout the whole course of experience." [2] This original interconnection is never severed; and the ever-increasing domination of reason means that all the various determinants of action are brought more and more to the bar of thought, which not only judges between them but takes an active part in formulating and organising them. Since again reason implies objectivity, it is incessantly impelled by its inherent expansive tendency to seek the highest form of value, and always to present its attainment as the ideal end of conduct; only here what is ideal is at the same time essentially real. "The moral ideal is a condition in which the passions and emotions are developed in accord with a supreme law of life dictated by rational insight." [3]

The bearing of these principles upon moral obliga-

[1] Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 89. [2] P. 139, *ante*.
[3] Professor A. E. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 96.

tion still remains to be considered; and it is perhaps best approached with reference to Kant's typical standpoint. For the conclusion arrived at here agrees to some extent with Kant's analysis of the moral situation; but his position, considered on the whole, appears to me to be fundamentally erroneous. The principle that the (Kantian) categorical imperative "must spring directly out of reason, and must directly connect the act with the conception of the will of the rational being as such,"[1] is obviously substantially identical, so far as it goes, with the foregoing. But when, with reference to the question "whether we can prove *a priori* that there actually is an imperative binding on all rational beings,"—and this, obviously, is the crux of the whole philosophical form of the ethical problem —Kant asserts that "the existence of such a principle cannot be derived from the peculiar constitution of human nature. It applies to all rational beings, and in the case of beings who possess a sensuous nature it must take the form of an imperative,"[2] he is basing the moral imperative, as such, solely on the sensuous, as distinct from the rational, content of experience. This is further evidenced by the statements that duty is "a conception not identical with that of an absolutely good will, but only with a will which is good as manifested under the limitations of our sensuous nature and notwithstanding the obstruction of external circumstances. . . . Were man a member only of (the intelligible world), his actions would necessarily conform to the autonomy of the will; but as he is also a member of

[1] *The Philosophy of Kant Explained* (Watson), p. 319. *Cf.* p. 315: "The sole basis of duty is reason."

[2] *Ibid.* p. 325; *cf.* p. 318: "imperatives are limited to beings whose will is imperfect." *Cf.* Wallace, *Proleg.* p. 90: "the command of duty, addressed to the sensuously conditioned nature."

the world of sense, all that we can say is, that his actions ought to conform to the autonomy of the will." [1]

If this interpretation is correct, it is obvious, I think, that Kant rejects any real universality of the moral imperative; for he holds that this is related, not to all finite beings *as finite*, but only to such as are sensuous; or more precisely, and more in accordance with human experience, it is addressed not to the rational element in human nature, but only to the sensuous; at least, only to personality in virtue of its sensuous content; and yet in spite of this indissoluble relation desire must ever remain severed from duty; for "duty excludes all acts (whose) motive is inclination, even when not opposed to duty." [2]

Now self-determination, operating as it does through reference to the specifically rational content of experience, implies the priority of reason, in the sense that conduct becomes essentially more and more influenced by its development. If therefore the Kantian moral imperative has any concrete reality—if it is anything more than a philosophic or religious fiction—it must be directed to reason, whose own advance must then take place as a response thereto; and the "necessity" which characterises every step in the development of pure reason—that inherent logical compulsion which impels it unceasingly to transcend any given intellective content—becomes in its essence one form of the universal moral imperative. This principle, as we have seen already in another connection, has received some degree of recognition. "A man is good in as far as his being is unified at all in any sphere of wisdom or

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 311, 334, 335.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 312. *Cf.* Professor Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophical Radicals*, pp. 223-226.

activity. . . . One cannot say that morality is entirely unimpaired by æsthetic and scientific incapacity." [1] The inexhaustible development of pure thought presents, we may say, one specific mode of the self-determination of the Whole, or one phase of the universal—and essentially dynamic—relations of the Absolute to its finite constituents. Certainly we must recognise here the presence of a "desire for knowledge"; but this can in itself determine neither the methods nor the issues of the logical advance, as such; and if it is allowed to become too obtrusive it may vitiate the precision of the results.

This leads us to another aspect in which Kant's limitation of the moral imperative to the sensuous content of personality seems to be theoretically defective. "This imperative," as we have seen, "must spring directly out of reason"; and it is perhaps natural to regard it therefore as addressed only to the non-rational—*i.e.* in actual life, to the sensuous; for to view it as directed by reason to reason appears either superfluous or contradictory. But this difficulty disappears when we take the demand to proceed from a more advanced rational level to one that is not so complete; or, more accurately, from a more highly intellective form of experience to a complex determined by some less developed rational content; this view brings the situation into closer touch with actuality, for (as has already been pointed out) to dissever the rational from its unity with the sensuous is to deal only with abstractions.

But the first essential point is to maintain the universality and unimpaired continuity of that spiritual order which constituted for Kant his "categorical

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality*, p. 347.

imperative." "There seems to be in the recognition of a supreme authority . . . something which need not disappear even if we should imagine our desires brought wholly into accord with the moral law. The tendency in Kant . . . to identify that authoritative character with that opposition (between the moral law and our desires) does mar his exposition."[1] We must recognise that once reason has begun its search for objective value or completeness as both the regulative idea and the final aim of conduct, it is bound, by its unceasingly self-transcending nature, to advance to the concept of the dynamic Whole or Absolute as at once the ground and the standard of value; and further, not only to apprehend this supreme concept in any merely abstractly rational manner, but also to relate it immediately and uninterruptedly to the experience of the unitary personality of which reason is itself the determinative element. To fail to do this is to deny its own real nature, to defeat its essential purpose, and, in short, to mutilate the entire individuality in which alone it finds its proper sphere.

[1] Professor C. C. J. Webb, *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xx. p. 115.

XXIII

FROM REASON TO OBLIGATION

THERE arises here a further point of fundamental importance. The principle that the self-determination of the Whole is continuous and universal does not imply that it is everywhere uniformly manifested. On the contrary, and in consonance with the infinite diversity of reality, the mode of its influence is always conditioned by the specific character of the sub-systems upon which it operates. This is shown most clearly in its most extreme forms—in the profound contrast (that is) between pure causal necessity and "free" self-determination; but it is equally true with regard to the whole infinite series of intermediate phases which connect these extremes with each other and which, when truly apprehended, disprove the absoluteness of their opposition. From this point of view it even becomes possible to adopt Kant's marked distinction between the sensuous and the rational, and in applying it anew and (I think) more accurately, to perceive the truth which underlay his own faulty conclusions. For, as we have seen, Kant denied the existence of the moral imperative, as such, outside the range of sensuous experience, and thus set up a fundamental dualism within the sphere of personality.

Against this I have maintained the universality of

the imperative, and its applicability to all phases of our experience without exception—to the rational therefore equally with the sensuous. But, consistently with the principle to which I have just drawn attention, the *manner* in which it is actually experienced within personality, on its predominantly sensuous side, must be widely different from that relevant to its rational aspect;[1] and it may be suggested that this striking difference came to be regarded by Kant—but erroneously—as involving the non-existence of any imperative addressed solely to the reason. He identified, in short, the *existence* of his moral imperative with one characteristic mode of *our consciousness* of its operation; and he accordingly concluded that it had ceased to exist, when what had actually occurred was merely that this mode, concurrently with changed conditions, had given place to another.

For the rational cognition of the Whole as the supreme source and criterion of value—a judgement for which, it is essential to remember, value in some form is always the end of action—involves in itself little serious difficulty. It—or some approximation to it—is what reason must attain once it takes itself seriously and interprets aright its own nature. When, *e.g.*, the content of a logical or mathematical principle, more comprehensive and ultimate than its predecessors, has once been apprehended, to refuse to adopt it, except on some irrational ground, is the abdication of reason itself. So long as it is untrammelled by such non-rational influences, the continued advance of reason—but always as the determinant of action—is most truly apprehended as being simply the active

[1] These aspects are in themselves alone mere abstractions, and never have separate actual existence.

manifestation of its own dynamic and self-transcending nature.[1] Its expansion, we may say, is identical—within its always finite limits—with the infinite self-realisation of the Whole. This is the principle which underlies Green's idealism. "Green pictures the growth of our knowledge as the gradual development in us of the consciousness of an eternal order in the universe, and inasmuch as this order cannot exist apart from the consciousness of it, an eternal consciousness must be operative in us to produce the gradual development of our knowledge."[2] Somewhat analogous to this is the position of modern Italian neo-idealism, with its "aspiration to conceive mind as the transcendental activity productive of the objective world of experience."[3] With respect to both of these historic methods of treating an extremely difficult problem, it appears to me that the identity between the individual consciousness, or the empirical ego, and the universal consciousness, or transcendental self, is achieved in too summary a manner; but this need not prevent the acceptance of the conclusion that reason, in concrete personal experience, advances at once under the pressure of the Absolute and towards the concept of the Whole.

Further, since this expansion at its highest levels is never necessitated mechanically and altogether from without, but is sustained predominantly from within, it becomes—in these its most characteristic forms—more and more self-determined or free. It is, however, easy to misread the true character of this development. Here, as elsewhere in our interpreta-

[1] Professor Hoernlé has expanded this principle to the case of investigators being irresistibly carried forward by the impulse of their culture or art in some special form (*Studies in Contemporary Metaphysics*, p. 291).

[2] Professor Boyce Gibson, *Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 80.

[3] Gentile, *Mind as Pure Act*, p. 43.

tion of the phenomena of Nature—and thought, from the psychological standpoint, is essentially a natural process—attention becomes centred too much upon the extremes, and the equally important implications of less well marked instances are lost sight of. Thus there has arisen the tendency to emphasise the absolute "freedom" both of Reason and of Art. The sincere thinker and the true artist, it is held, are subject either to no law at all, or at the most to a self-created and self-imposed law; every genius is supposed to make his own laws at his own pleasure. To a high degree, of course, this is undeniably true; as a protest against artificial dogma and arbitrary authority it is perfectly justified. But except in that regard the contention would be supported by no competent worker in either sphere. Nothing can be more sensitive than the trained and refined scientific and artistic "conscience"; the law of its world is the breath of its being. All success depends on the rigid observance of its inviolable decalogue; in no other sphere of experience is order more supreme; nowhere is there so immediate and emphatic a revulsion from that false "freedom" which is mere licence and caprice. The great artist, it is true, unlike the logician, rarely formulates the law he obeys. He is too keenly conscious that nothing he can say will be rightly understood; his expression of it therefore is mainly negative—he enunciates only its "thou shalt not's." But this is paralleled by the fact that every competent logician would admit that the profoundest laws of thought still remain to be discovered; all that we are certain of—all that is so far generally accepted—are certain "rules of thumb." We have seen already that "the lyric follows instinct." But it is a "faultless instinct"—the unerring utterance

of a spirituality which is sub-conscious because it is hyper-conscious—impersonal and superpersonal at one and the same moment:

> a flash of the will that can,
> Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are.

It is this that explains the difficulty of formulation, the paucity of expression. Art and Thought alike are in direct contact with Reality; "fine art only achieves its highest task when it has become simply a mode of revealing to consciousness and bringing to utterance the Divine Nature";[1] and this Nature which they both strive to realise is too infinitely complex to be condensed within any simple positive rules.

Thus the freedom which they enjoy is attained always and only through advancing self-determination. The "self," however, is never the personal ego, but rather the expanding world of art or of thought as the case may be; which is transpersonal even while it employs the ego as its instrument. If we could take the race always at its highest level and merge it into one, we might then obtain a superpersonal "self" adequate to the material with which it works—"the unique and unifying transcendental I, in which the whole objectivity of spiritual beings is resolved," of the Italian idealists.[2] Only such a "self" could be truly self-determining. In every empirical ego, on the other hand, mental development begins by being mainly externally regulated. The child learns mechanically; he is taught by an authority which presents even the most self-evident truths as sheer dogma. But once this stage is passed externality is more and

[1] Dr. Bosanquet, *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art*, p. 48.
[2] Gentile, *loc. cit.* p. 15.

more repudiated. The appeal is directed more and more to the nature—to the necessary self-implications—of the subject itself as its own authority and justification; and every genius, even in making "his own laws," is inwardly conscious that his own activity is merely instrumental; he discovers only what is eternally true, in the sense that it is already implied in all that is truest of what was previously known and achieved. Einstein no more disproves Newton than Shakespeare dethrones Homer; each alike widens and enriches the world they hold in common; and thus there arises the free response of pure reason—so free indeed as sometimes to seem almost effortless—to the pressure and demands of the Reason of the Whole.

But pure reason alone plays but an insignificant part in actual experience. Its deliverances must always be addressed to a highly organised system of desires and impulses[1]—to that sensuous content in fact, whose existence constituted for Kant the sole actual ground of moral obligation. This system, further, has acquired its very strength and permanence largely through the continuous influence exerted upon it, from its earliest crude and instinctive stages, by reason itself. All its ends and methods have been regulated, its satisfactions graded and interrelated, partly (as in the animal world) through their own interplay and direct response to environment, but mainly under the direction of man's reason. And although this whole sensuo-rational system is characteristically plastic and definitely responsive, none the less its modification on any extended scale must, merely in virtue of what may be quite legitimately called its inertia, involve so

[1] To these volitions might be added; but "will is reasoned impulse" (Wallace, *Prolegomena*, p. 186).

much effort and resistance that even greatly increased pleasure is often insufficient to overcome the friction. It should be noted that this is true quite apart from any distinctively moral considerations; it is the psychological basis of every habit and bias; and while its importance for ethical theory is obvious, still its real significance may be, as apparently in the case of Kant, misinterpreted.[1]

For Kant, as we have already gathered, regarded the inertial reaction of this sensuous system as furnishing the sole basis for the felt imperiousness of the moral imperative, *i.e.* as distinguished both from its own inherent supremacy and from its nature as pure law. As Professor Hobhouse has shown in his excellent psychological analysis of this internal striving, "it is because, in the conflict between desire and will, we are urged by massed forces of impulse guided by conceptions we can only in part make articulate that we have that sense of constraint so conspicuous in the case of felt moral obligation."[2] Kant indeed regarded this "conflict between desire and will" as almost absolute. "Kant lifts man *as a moral being* clean out of the natural system. The moral and the natural worlds, that of the responsible will and that of the desires, are quite separate. So alien are these that the subjection of the desires can never be complete; no action can be morally perfect; the pursuit of the moral end is along an asymptotic path which never reaches its goal."[3]

On this fundamentally important point Kant would seem to have been unduly impressed by the analogy of strictly natural law, even if he did not further merely presuppose, in consonance with his general treatment

[1] *Cf.* p. 273 below. [2] *The Rational Good*, p. 49. [3] *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 138.

of the problem of the *a priori*, the categorical imperative. As Professor Watson has presented Kant's general problem, it takes the form how to "justify a categorical imperative, an *a priori* synthetic judgement of morality which cannot be derived from experience.[1] The enquiry will correspond to the metaphysical deduction of the categories. We *assume in the meantime that there is a categorical imperative*, and we simply ask what must be its character."[2] His method and his results here, therefore, must stand or fall with the validity of the "metaphysical deduction" itself—a subject that includes, however, much more than the specific problems of ethics, and must here be pursued no further. But his attitude towards "law" touches ethics much more closely. "As rational" (continues Professor Watson) "action presupposes the consciousness of a law which (man) may or may not obey. This law presents itself to him as an imperative, because he finds in himself certain natural desires, the claims of which to determine his action reason refuses to acknowledge. A law of nature is employed as the analogue of a free act; the law must have the universality and inviolability characteristic of a law of nature, but not its external necessity."[3]

If the scientific relativists will still permit us to draw a distinction between the law of gravitation and the force of gravitation, we may take this passage to mean that the moral law is in itself always a mere affirmatory law and never an active force. It is nothing more than a generalisation attained or even presupposed by reason, and is "universal" and "inviolable" only in the

[1] But from "experience" (presumably) in its distinctively limited Kantian meaning of sense or perceptual experience.

[2] *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, p. 321. Italics mine.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 323.

abstract rational sense that there are, *e.g.*, no exceptions to the (Newtonian or other) formula for gravitational phenomena; but it is not dynamic—it is not in itself a force or agent; its imperativeness arises from what is almost as it were an accident—*i.e.* from the sensuous and therefore (for Kant) non-rational elements within personality; which is as if we were to say that man may or may not obey the law of gravitation, because the force of gravitation only begins to operate when we ourselves become acutely conscious of it by attempting to move large solid objects.

I have dealt at some length with Kant's presentation of the moral imperative, because it appears to me that while it enunciates principles of profound truth and eternal value—principles which no sound ethical theory can ever disregard—it is nevertheless fundamentally incomplete in its limitation of the attribute of imperativeness. This would remain true, in my opinion, even if Kant's final position were free from the formality and abstractness which are almost universally charged against it; if, that is, his conclusions were as unimpeachable concretely as they are admitted to be formally. There seems no doubt that in this respect no suggestion of this form of criticism occurred to Kant himself; he judged that he had finally established the ultimacy and universality of his imperative. Possibly the explanation of this lies in the intricacies of our modern key to all secrets of the spirit, the Unconscious. During its long history the Unconscious must surely have acquired characteristics which are definitely national; and it may be that the Scottish strain in Kant's temperament testified so forcibly to the indubitable reality of the moral imperative that the German impulse to establish all things on a sound

metaphysical basis became satisfied in his case somewhat prematurely. Or, to borrow another illustration from scientific relativity, we may say that the "manifold" of the Kantian moral universe was warped, so that what seemed to Kant—living in that universe—as the undeviating course of rational proof was really slightly distorted and foreshortened.

The defect, further, has more than mere historical importance, because an analogous tendency seems to characterise present-day systems of ethical theory; and the principle of obligation, as was suggested in my first chapter, appears still to lack proper emphasis. It is possible that there is here a kind of vicious circle. The very intensity of the consciousness of obligation, in those instances where it manifests itself, seems in the first place to render all rational justification superfluous and valueless; merging within some mode of mystical experience, it becomes its own final guarantee. Reason, on the other hand, distrusting every species of non-rational experience which claims to witness innately to anything objective, tends to question the validity of this consciousness of obligation together with that of all mystical or authoritative deliverances in general. There are, of course, exceptions to this. Ethicists who write from a specifically religious standpoint naturally endeavour to discover rational grounds for the authoritativeness of their moral codes. Sidgwick's final position, again, was not far removed from this. He refused "to reduce the notion of 'ought' to terms of anything else, as the earlier Utilitarians had done. For him, as much as for any Intuitionist, ought is an irreducible datum of moral consciousness."[1] On

[1] Albee, *History of English Utilitarianism*, p. 415. *Cf.*, with reference to Bentham, p. 168.

this point, as the historian of the movement has shown, Sidgwick broke definitely with the tradition; for earlier Utilitarianism—as has already been seen—lacked a "genuine ought." Mill held "the sense of obligation to be built up by educative processes and the laws of Association on the basis of a substratum of sympathy or social feeling which he took to be natural. . . . Social and 'unselfish' action becomes psychologically possible on Mill's view, but whether it becomes rationally imperative is another question. . . . If a man already finds his greatest pleasure in promoting the general happiness no question of obligation arises."[1] On the other hand, Professor Alexander "is inclined to reject the word 'must' from philosophy";[2] and in this, though himself a realist, he approximates to what seems to me to be an outstanding characteristic of modern idealist ethics; that is, the subordination of the factor of obligation — as such —to that of rationality—again as such. How far this suggestion is true of the thinkers themselves it is of course impossible to say. It may easily be the case that in thus exalting reason, as they quite rightly and justifiably do, they by no means intend to depreciate the factor of imperativeness, except when this proves to be arbitrarily dogmatic. Nevertheless, as I shall try to show, it seems fair to say that the impression to be derived from their works is that it is the rationality of the end, or the value of the good, rather than any element of pure obligation, which is the sole stimulus towards its attainment, and in this way the mainspring of all moral action.

As we have just seen in Professor Hobhouse's

[1] Professor Hobhouse, *The Rational Good*, pp. 139, 140.
[2] *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 168.

comment upon Mill's Utilitarianism, if the agent's own pleasure results from his promotion of the general happiness, " no question of obligation arises." Such cases of course are very exceptional; the general happiness, as a rule, necessitates the subordination and sacrifice of some individual's happiness. If therefore—to continue our quotation—" he feels nothing of the kind, or halts between two decisions, in what sense can we tell him that he ' ought ' to decide for one course rather than the other? The end is not merely something which we desire but something which we believe to be rationally demonstrable as the Good. . . . It is reasonable so to act as to further the good of the whole. The obligation which lies upon the individual to sacrifice himself is founded on his relation to the whole . . . is rationally justified as contributing to the rational good. . . . The necessity of sacrifice rests on existing disharmonies, is bad." [1]

Here the appeal is obviously to rationality; and I have quoted this passage merely as illustrating one prominent tendency of modern theory, and with no desire to criticise it adversely. On the contrary, as my previous references to Reason may suggest, I should accept and strongly support it; but with the proviso that it seems to me to be in itself insufficient, and not completely adequate to the whole nature of moral experience. It is natural, again, to suppose that the optimistic intellectualism of Spencer would favour the opinion that " moral obligation proper . . . may be expected to diminish in proportion as moral conduct ceases to depend on merely external restraints. The sense of duty or moral obligation is transitory, [and] will diminish till it finally disappears with the complete

[1] *The Rational Good*, pp. 140, 144, 145.

adaptation of man to the social state." And generally, if only as a result of the rapid advance in social order and in refinement, "the antithesis between duty, in the grimly forbidding sense, and inclination tends to disappear. . . . As moral progress is made, desirable and desired tend to approximate."[1]

A few further quotations will suffice to confirm the prominence of rationality as the ultimate sanction of the pursuit of the Good. "Moral goodness, which is the *becoming* morally good, must itself be a process of the real. The movement must be seen as the very best thing that could take place" (here we may contrast Professor Hobhouse's description of sacrifice as, though unavoidable, yet still bad), "as that in which the world of the real reveals its true character and reaches its full fruition. . . . The process of evolution culminates in converting man's natural needs into spiritual ideals freely sought" (which suggests Spencer rather than Kant). "Man's rights are conclusive and his claims are sound only because the good actually is at their back; and his duties are binding for the same reason."[2] And finally, "that only can be right which can be required of a man in the name of his own nature as a self-determining being. . . . Man can only be free in being a law to himself."[3]

It is plain from all these characteristic utterances of leading modern ethicists that the feature of obligation, in almost every sense, and certainly in the stern sense of earlier thought, is either altogether absent, or is subordinated to the attribute of unimpeachable ration-

[1] Albee, *History of English Utilitarianism*, pp. 311, 315. The author proceeds to discuss the "fatal difficulty" confronting this belief. Contrast with Spencer's belief Kant, p. 247, *ante*.

[2] *A Faith that Enquires*, pp. 196-199.

[3] *Life of Edward Caird*, pp. 323, 327.

ality. But it seems to me necessary that ethics, so far as it is truly philosophical rather than simply practical,[1] must go a step further and must base itself ultimately on pure obligation; although obligation may prove to be perfectly consistent with rationality. I am glad to find that a similar opinion has been recently expressed by Professor Webb: "I conceive that Kant was in the right in finding the essential feature of our moral consciousness in the sense of obligation. . . . The authority whose command was conveyed in the categorical imperative of morality was that of the Reason which is common to us all. . . . By considering (the general will) in abstraction from the consciousness of obligation (we) miss what alone gives to that will any ethical significance."[2] There is here involved a distinction which is fundamental, in the sense that even rationality must find its ultimate basis in pure obligation, rather than absolute obligation in rationality;[3] and this both on practical grounds — which ethics can never for a moment disregard—and on grounds of philosophic theory. So far (in the first place) as practice is concerned the situation must be faced that the "law to himself," through which alone man can be free, appears in many cases—and those the most crucially important—to be a law *against* himself, so far, *i.e.*, as the individual's own reason enables him to perceive. And when, as so frequently happens, every rational justification of the extremest self-sacrifice is repudiated, the universal recourse to coercive methods

[1] But this does not imply any divorce of practice from theory. Except in popular judgement the two are indissoluble, although theory as such is not always expedient; still all the essentials of Pragmatism are easily discoverable even in Hegel's *Logic*.

[2] *Proc. Arist. Soc.* vol. xx. pp. 114, 117, 120.

[3] Professor Hobhouse appears to me to adopt the second of these two standpoints. *Cf.* his discussion of moral obligation in *The Rational Good*, pp. 83-89.

springs undoubtedly from a sound instinct. In practice, of course, emotion is far more powerful than reason;[1] but this does not relieve philosophic theory from attempting to justify the appeal to obligation *as* obligation.

It may be said that the idea of obligation is necessarily implicit in the term "law." But "law" has a wide range of meaning; and the question for ethics is—Does "law" express something that is essentially and inherently obligatory? The law, it must be recalled, is here, as a matter of fundamental principle, a self-imposed law; the individual, as an individual, is a "law to himself." For in this his freedom consists; and apart from freedom there is no true morality—a point which has been given marked emphasis by Sir Henry Jones. "The intensely individual character of moral responsibility cannot be compromised. Man does what is right or what is wrong as if he were the sole living being in the Universe. . . . All that is spiritual must be individual."[2] When therefore the modern interpretations of "law" as merely formularistic or explanatory, rather than executive and dynamic, are excluded, there still remains the question why the individual should lay upon himself, as a coercive law, one code rather than another, particularly when this involves the necessity for self-sacrifice. It will be remembered that although Napoleon invited the Pope to his coronation, he nevertheless placed the

[1] "How about the exceptions, where a man may seem to be the loser by his integrity? Hume practically admits that he has no arguments of a strictly logical kind with which to meet this difficulty, but rather lays stress on the inward peace of mind" (Albee, *History of English Utilitarianism*, p. 110). "Perhaps the noblest abjure their own ease not rationally but impulsively" (Mr. A. C. Benson, *Thy Rod and Thy Staff*, p. 79).

[2] *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 200.

imperial crown upon his head with his own hands; a procedure, in his case, of profound significance. Is the self then also a Napoleon? Is the self equal to, or even higher than, its freely accepted law? Or is the law higher than the individual self? And if so, what becomes of his freedom?

It appears to me extremely difficult, under modern conditions, to appeal from the self to any form of society,[1] unless it is frankly admitted that the society is justified in resorting on due occasion to such a degree of coercion as will ensure its supremacy. For the individual is no longer, as in earlier days, immediately dependent upon the welfare of his social group. On the contrary, his own well-being is very frequently best assured either by acting against the interests of society, or at least by methodically subordinating the interests of others to his own; and if he feels that, to himself, he is of supreme value, it seems logical to argue that the principle of equal freedom itself implies that no group of any kind can do more than match its abilities with his; it can have no inherent right, beyond that of the weight of numbers, to demand from him any voluntary surrender of his own interests. It is assumed here that no considerations such as those of tradition, or emotion, or religion, are brought to bear. The basis of argument is the *purely rational* right of society—but of nothing beyond—as against that of the admittedly free individual; and from this standpoint not only do many act from solely egoistic motives, but it is often admitted that in matters of belief, or conscience, or political convictions, the individual must remain the final judge of his own

[1] *Cf.* the earlier quotation from Professor Hobhouse: "It is reasonable so to act as to further the good of the Whole."

conduct. It is therefore wholly illogical to reply that such an attitude implies a low standard of morality; for the moral standard, as based on this special standpoint, is here the very question at issue. Nor again can it be contended that the individual is never a mere individual, but always a member of some society, and dependent upon it not only for his maintenance but also for the successful furthering of his own ends. For while all this is certainly true, still it amounts to no more than a description of his natural or historical status, just as, *e.g.*, both wolves and beavers are gregarious animals. But it does not determine whether his standard of conduct should be wolf-morality or beaver-morality; and it equally excludes any common basis of action, accepted merely as a compromise, between contending individualistic claims. For in practice this may differ in no degree from the rule of the wolf-pack; and in theory it implies that personal rights are primary, and should be renounced only so far as the pressure of antagonistic claims proves itself to be effective.

I conclude therefore that the claims of society, so far as they conflict directly with the purposes of any individual, and involve their abandonment and the unwilling sacrifice of himself, require a deeper and wider basis than the reasoned explication of the nature of society (as such) on the one hand, and—what is of course plainly involved in this—of the individual himself, as a member of society. This conclusion is here stated in its most comprehensive form; but "society" may be taken to mean the whole of humanity, or any association more limited either in number or in status; and "individual" (similarly) as a single person, or any group which is, however, restricted as

compared with the "society" in any given case. Further, the profounder basis which I hold to be indispensable can be found only in obligation or imperativeness, purely as such; or even, if its true meaning is properly elucidated, in Necessity itself.

XXIV

THE ULTIMATE BASIS OF MORAL OBLIGATION

This final stage of our whole enquiry consists then in the explication of the ultimate nature of obligation, as this manifests itself specifically within the moral world; and it is fundamentally important to apprehend, in the first place, the true significance here of the term "moral world." For it must not be taken to imply, in the slightest degree, the isolation of the sphere of moral action from the rest of experience, or of moral phenomena from all other categories of world process. On the contrary, an unimpaired continuity must be maintained throughout both the whole of experience and the whole of its objective content—in principle, that is, even the whole of Reality. It is a familiar contention that morality is indissolubly one with religion; and without discussing the specific nature of this unity, I wish here to accept its principle and to extend its application—as a principle—to experience and its objects as a whole. Morality, in other words, must be related to, not severed from, the remainder of experience; but it is impossible thus to relate it until it has been assigned its own distinctive characteristics.

Exactly what should be included in, and excluded from, the totality of moral experience is of course a

matter for argument. But whatever detailed conclusions are arrived at, two fundamentals always remain. The first is freedom, in the fullest sense of the word that is compatible with personality; freedom of choice, of decision, of action; "the essence of all ethics is shut up in the word Autonomy." The second is obligation, imperativeness, duty in its most rigid—even its most repulsive—form; "Kant was right in finding the essential feature of our moral consciousness in the sense of obligation"; and it is plain, quite apart from what has been said previously on the matter, that these two features, while equally fundamental, also appear at first sight to be antithetical and therefore mutually exclusive; each in turn has been sacrificed or subordinated by historic ethical systems and religious codes. Not only therefore must moral experience be related—externally as it were—to the remainder of experience, but it must also be internally harmonised; some ultimate common basis must be found which will banish the antithesis, and unify—but without abolishing—the apparently opposed elements.

Such a principle of internal unity—which must be also a basis of connection between moral experience and the whole of experience—can be found, obviously, only in some character which is a universal attribute of all Reality. If there be no such attribute—if Reality is not somehow one and unified—if, that is, the only true philosophy is a literal and absolute Pluralism—then must morality subsist in splendid isolation as one of the many separate and unconnected Reals. Absolute Pluralism of this type has, however, been repudiated throughout, and several attributes have been advanced and elucidated as universally real—

system, individuality, organisation, development; but above all, determination; and it is in determination, when traced throughout all its infinitely various modes, that the final solution of all our problems is to be found.

It has been argued throughout that every event, or process, or thing, is determined by some other process or entity.[1] Everything, that is to say, has its cause, its explanation, its ground, in something outside itself; and further, has its final cause, its complete explanation, its ultimate ground, only within the whole of Reality. Thus determination, in its fullest meaning, signifies the relation between the Whole, as the Whole, and each and all of its constituent elements or parts—"the general relation between the Whole and its individual elements";[2] a relation further, which is essentially active, creative, dynamic.

This dynamic relation, then, is universal. But it is not therefore unvarying or homogeneous in its modes of manifestation. It is on the contrary a relation essentially plastic and variable; and the manner of its operation depends always upon the complexity of the system or individual upon which, and within which, it acts. It is unnecessary to repeat in detail what has already been argued as to the logical consequences of advancing complexity;[3] but in summarising the results it must be emphasised that complexity means very much more than any mere aggregation or repetition, number, or simply static organisation. It implies always a unified diversity, which is essentially *dynamic*; and it is only when the significance of a continuous increase in the elements—at once diverse and energetic—which become united within one individual

[1] *Cf.* especially Chap. IX., *ante*. [2] P. 87, *ante*. [3] *Cf.* Chap. XI., *ante*.

system is fully realised that the argument can be duly appraised and criticised. Perhaps the simplest instance is that of the natural series of atoms,[1] where many of the profound contrasts in their properties can be directly related to the continued increase in the number of electrons. Now apart from the difference between the positive nucleus and the negative electron, all the constituents here are precisely similar to one another; and yet, in the face of this almost complete homogeneity, the results of their combination are such that "mathematical difficulties prohibit us from investigating the possible radiation from an atom containing more than one electron and a nucleus."[2] If, then, instead of factors which are all alike, the systems contain many dissimilar elements, their rising complexity must be of the utmost significance; and I have argued that, for philosophical ethics, its importance consists in the fact that "systems and processes which appear first as mechanical or as necessarily determined, gradually merge insensibly into those which are described as autonomous or free."[3] This "freedom," finally, in its highest and most characteristic forms, is true self-determination; which within finite experience, however, is never absolute.

Determination, then, is universal; there is no escape from it in any way whatever; every thing exists, and every process goes on, under its sway and as its manifestation. Attributed to the Whole as such, it is absolute self-determination,—absolute freedom. Every finite real, on the other hand, is never more than partially self-determined; there is always present some degree of external determination, arising and

[1] Distinguished by the series of "atomic numbers" from 1 to 92.
[2] *Science Progress*, Oct. 1921, p. 233. [3] P. 107, *ante*.

proceeding from the action of the Whole; so that in the simplest physical processes self-determination scarcely exists at all, and everything is determined from without; as *e.g.* in the path followed by an electron.[1]

It appears to me that when these principles are considered in their bearing upon personality, all the conflicting, or even paradoxical, characteristics of moral experience at once fall into their proper place as the perfectly natural [2] or logical consequences of universal development; and morality, in thus becoming truly related to the Whole within which it subsists, becomes at the same time self-harmonised, and so loses its aspects of anomaly and antithesis.

For personality, in the first place, is characterised by freedom. In virtue of his inherent rationality, the volitional actions of a person are free in the sense that they are really self-determined. That, as we have seen, is what constitutes concrete rationality; "the development of a controlling and directing mental content is what comes to constitute reason." [3] But freedom, interpreted thus as self-determination, is but the logical attribute of the extremely high complexity of all personality; it is neither miraculous nor anomalous, but simply the manifestation, at its proper stage, of the due measure of self-determination. In the human mind, as individual and as social, it is seen at the highest levels which it attains within the range of our direct experience; and in these modes of its

[1] It will be recalled that Dr. Whitehead relates every electron theoretically to the Universe (p. 104, *ante*). If again its path is taken to be a result or property of the physical space-time manifold we at once obtain another striking instance of determination directly by the Whole. *Cf.* the note on the properties of space, p. 216, *ante*.

[2] Not, however, merely in the sense of philosophic Naturalism, but rather as rationally inevitable or logically consistent.

[3] *Cf.* p. 136, *ante*. "Only a rational being has a will." I should like again to refer to Professor Hobhouse's analysis in *The Rational Good*, pp. 44-51.

appearance it undoubtedly seems, at first sight, to be unique and peculiar, with but the slightest affinities to any process within the lower realms of Nature. But, taken at first sight, much the same may be said of the human brain, or even the human body as a whole; and in both cases alike the analysis of their development discloses an unbroken continuity. Science, following this continuity in all its details, traces the course of each separate evolutionary path; while philosophy, concerned with the universal process rather than with its specific products, regards it most fittingly as the unceasing expansion of that self-determination which is possessed in its fullness only by the Whole;[1] and to ethics again this presents itself as the ever-growing capacity to manifest true freedom.

In accordance with the spirit of our day the reality of freedom is readily accepted; it is only when it is sought to relate it to an equally real obligation that the crucial difficulty arises; the more particularly if, as has just been affirmed, freedom is incessantly expanding without any limits. It is obvious, in the first place, that there must always exist a distinct factor of *external* determination, even though this is constantly falling in its proportion and amount; for actions which attain the highest degree of freedom must nevertheless conform to rigid physical, or even economic, conditions. But it is not within this type of determination, the value of which has already been considered in treating of the function of mechanisms in the world, that the basis of moral obligation is to be found; for this would be to introduce obligation in quite too undignified a manner, by the back stairs as

[1] *Cf.* "The Conditions which Determine Development"; *The Monist*, vol. xxxi. p. 367.

it were; such external determination must therefore be altogether excluded from consideration here. It is rather in and through the nature of rationality itself —although it still remains the only basis of free action —that the reality of obligation is to be established.

For if we choose to distinguish between "pure" reason, and reason in its connection with action, we have found that pure reason can progress only through the rigid observance of its own distinctive code of absolute necessity. Choice seems here to be impossible; the only alternatives lie in thinking, or not thinking; and if we think at all, then the "laws of thought"[1] must be implicitly observed, equally without exception as without reservation. Such severity of spiritual discipline can be paralleled—as has been observed already—only within the highest artistic experience, ruled as this is by binding principles which can be infringed only by still profounder law;[2] and thus we seem to find reigning the same necessity that controls the realm of Nature, swayed by its invariable physical law.

This parallelism is of the highest significance. For there actually exists no specifically "pure" reason, unique in its nature and isolated in its activity. Reason is essentially one, and always has some reference to action; thus it is operative throughout all the higher levels of personality. Nevertheless the distinction between thinking and acting—between theory and practice—between conduct and contemplation—has a certain measure of justification; and here it will be adopted in so far as practice and conduct constitute the

[1] This term denotes, however, not merely such abstract postulates as the laws of identity and of excluded middle, but rather the widest principles of Logic.

[2] *Cf.* p. 245, *ante*.

primary sphere of morality. It thus becomes possible, in my opinion, to discover the true philosophical basis of moral obligation by applying the principle of the necessity of "pure" reason, to reason in its more intimate connection with conduct.

It must be recalled that the fundamental characteristic of the progressive rationalisation of conduct has been found in the gradual transition from subjective satisfaction to objective completeness; and then, further, in the rational judgement and comparison of values as contributing, in their varying degrees, to the fullest completeness. But once it has committed itself to this task the reasoning activity immediately falls under the direct influence of that necessity which —as has just been seen—dominates all thought and determines its whole development. Exactly as in the case of any complicated mathematical investigation, so here in the search for the highest values, reason must conform to its inherent law or must deny its own nature; it must then, as the logical outcome of its efforts, recognise and accept the Whole as the supreme perfection, and accord the highest value to whatever most contributes to the realisation of this perfection.[1]

But this comparison of the rational selection of values to mathematical or scientific research is an identification of principle, and not of detail. The precise methods to be adopted in each case must be relevant to the subject-matter; it is unreasonable, therefore, for the moralist always to adopt the detached and impersonal attitude of the scientist.[2] The former

[1] *Cf.* p. 218, *ante*.

[2] But at the same time, as Professor Boyce Gibson points out, "in so far as moral facts are attacked with the inductive weapon, a similar attitude should be observed towards them as by the astronomer in dealing with stars" (*Introduction to Ethics*, pp. 32, 33).

is compelled by the very nature of his enquiry to give due weight to instincts and impulses, to emotion and pleasure, to individual and to general happiness. None the less it remains essential to my argument that this "due weight" can be ascertained never immediately from themselves, but only by relating them to the Whole.

Thus the first aspect of obligation—and the aspect which has, I think, been omitted from Kant's ethical system—arises from, or rather within, the nature of "practical" reason itself. It is in the fullest sense a "categorical imperative," in so far as reason is transcendent as well as immanent; whether it can yet properly be called "moral" is a matter for later consideration. Immanent within each individual, reason is also transcendent—it is a moment of the self-realisation of the Whole. The imperative therefore is always much more than personal, for it bids the individual reason ever transcend itself. So far as reason as such is concerned, therefore, "freedom" in the ordinary sense is impossible. The only freedom lies in the self-determination of thought; and while the *activity* of thinking is subjective, the *laws* of reason are objective, transcendent, obligatory.

But in his selection of any value as the one towards whose realisation his actions shall be directed the individual remains absolutely free.[1] For the judgement that any value is supreme implies its comparison with others, each a possible determinant of action, with many of which it must to some degree conflict; and further, as the latest and least sensuous idea to be formed, it is excelled in the intensity of its appeal by almost all its predecessors. Here we find the cul-

[1] But subject as before to economic or physical conditions, etc.

mination of that long and difficult process of rationalisation, whereby animal activities and instinctive behaviour have become transformed into "conduct" in its proper sense, and by which automatism has been replaced by choice. Once acquired, this power of choosing remains, the inalienable guarantee of individual freedom, the indubitable manifestation of true self-determination.

Nevertheless, obligation still remains. Personal freedom, real though it is, is ever faced by the categorical imperative of the supreme value, which always demands, although it never enforces, its own realisation as the ultimate end of action. For we have found that Reason declares the highest value to lie in the fullest measure of contribution to the maintenance and development of the Whole; and when we realise explicitly the true nature of the Whole, there is at once implied an inexpugnable element of absolute obligation.

In the light of modern knowledge, Reality is most truly conceived as manifesting itself in an eternally dynamic and creative process,[1] which generates ever advancing grades of complex organisation. It is one and unified throughout, immanent in all finite reals at the same moment that it transcends them; everything finite, therefore, is a phase or element of the absolute Whole. As its product, it expresses (in its degree) the nature of the Whole; by its activity it furthers its dynamic process. Good, perfection, value, can have no conceivable origin nor criterion except the Whole; and from its universal determination there is no escape. But the Whole, as such, containing within itself the full circle of determination, is absolutely self-

[1] I have pointed out that creativeness is a principle of Idealism, not only of Bergsonism.

determined; for self-determination is but the logical corollary of universal determination; and when this is expressed in terms of the evolutionary process, it implies the continuous and uninterrupted transition from mechanical necessity to personal freedom. Throughout the realm of Nature, below the level of self-consciousness, this principle is undeniable; it is indeed the fundamental postulate of Science. There the universal process manifests itself first as mechanical necessity — uniformity of Nature — invariability of causes and effects; whereby the life of the Whole is carried on without let or hindrance by systems unconscious of their nature and final purpose. But as systematic complexity slowly increases finite self-determination gradually emerges, first feebly in the phenomena of life and then more fully in self-consciousness. The development is continuous throughout, so that the difficulty of harmonising, in face of their essential continuity, the necessity of Nature with the freedom of moral consciousness constitutes (as we have seen) a serious ethical problem.

Nevertheless—and this is the fundamental point—it is the same process that ever operates and expresses itself at *all* these levels—the process of the one self-realising Whole. For necessity and freedom, as I have endeavoured to show, are not really antithetical; they both spring from the same source, and are therefore continuous one with the other; their difference is merely the purely natural result of the change in the character of the systems in and through which the Whole is manifested. This change is itself an advance which is exactly relevant to the advance in the complex nature of the reals. But the relation between the Whole and its finite constituents never changes; it

remains as that universal determination which underlies *all* change and *all* advance, and as such is necessary, obligatory, imperative.

It is, therefore, obligatory upon human personality; only not as the mechanical necessity of Nature, for then personality could not be free. The evolution of freedom implies a relevant change in the mode of universal determination, so that this becomes operative no longer as *mechanical*, but as *moral*, necessity—as moral *obligation*. The self-determining Whole becomes faced by self-determining personality, a whole like itself, but finite and incomplete; free absolutely, therefore, to choose its ends of action, even when these come to include—as they must do under the self-determination of reason—the realisation of that supreme value which lies in the directest contribution to the Whole; free, therefore, to pursue its personal satisfaction and immediate gratification rather than sacrifice them at the behest of the Whole. Thus what was originally—in the physical world—a *command*, impossible to disregard, now becomes a *demand*, which may be recognised, or repudiated, by the absolutely free choice of the individual.

Here we discover, I believe, the ultimate basis—in the philosophic as distinct from the religious sense—of moral obligation; and it will be recalled that my principal aim has been to emphasise and to elucidate the obligatory aspect of the moral relation. So extensive and complex a subject, however, inevitably raises a number of subordinate issues which will be briefly discussed in the concluding chapter.

XXV

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Universal determination acts not only upon the entire personality, but also within it; and this enables us to appreciate Kant's treatment of our consciousness of obligation. The determinative relation, remaining the same throughout the whole range of its operation, can be in no way modified by the transition from the sensuous to the rational level of human individuality. Nevertheless our actual consciousness of the relation is profoundly different. Our consciousness of the imperativeness is much more intense and vivid on the sensuous than on the rational plane; and what may appear on the second as a pleasurable harmony becomes on the first the experience of difficulty, internal struggle and rebellion. But this results from no conflict between the purely rational on the one hand and the purely sensuous on the other; for such "pure" complexes do not exist; the sensuous, though not completely rational, is still essentially rationalised. Reason thus becomes opposed to itself, in the form of a more comprehensive stage to one that is less so. It has therefore always to overthrow what is, to a large extent, its own previous work—to transform systems which it has itself created and organised; to substitute, for ends and satisfactions that it itself has discovered and endorsed, others which, while in full accord with

the higher reason, still involve diminished pleasure, or even positive pain, to the sensuous personality which is thus being re-created or—to adopt a quite applicable religious term—re-born.

This reference to the sensuous aspect of personality suggests the questions of evil in all its forms, and of the pain of sacrifice. Adequate discussion of these subjects would add too much to the length of the present enquiry, and my suggestions can be merely briefly outlined. *Moral* evil, in the first place,—the deliberate choice of evil ends and performance of evil acts—is the logical corollary of moral freedom. Its total exclusion in advance would at once reduce the moral world to the level of the mechanical, where evil in its true sense is inconceivable. The moral agent enjoys an inherent capacity of choice, and this again logically implies alternatives which can subsist only as evil and good. Non-moral evils again, so far as they really exist, appear to be sometimes penal, sometimes remedial, and sometimes cautionary; they seem to me to present no serious difficulty in the face of an adequate philosophic presentation of the character of Reality.

The problem of the pain of sacrificing any good for the sake of a greater good must be considered in the light of general sensitivity—bodily, mental and spiritual. Just as freedom involves the possibility of evil as well as of good, so sensitivity implies the capacity to feel pain as well as pleasure. Every good, further, is in its way satisfactory. When therefore it brings with it happiness or pleasure, to abandon it must involve some degree—if only negative—of pain; its pleasurable content, again, is one incentive to its attainment; but this does not imply that pleasure is the principal element in the good. Finally, all

efficient functioning towards any good demands that high level of complex yet plastic organisation which is found, *e.g.*, throughout the realm of Life; and any substantial modification of such highly complex organisation is inevitably painful unless it is brought about gradually and almost insensibly.[1]

Prior to the moral plane evolutionary changes, with little exception, are in this way gradual, and the advance in "goods" coincides on the whole with an increase of pleasures; and the same is true, in my opinion, of the progress from barbarism to civilisation; but here what has just been said on evil and pain must be kept in mind. And as with pain in general, so with regard to the pain of sacrifice for the sake of higher good, it must be asked how far this is due to the prevalence of moral evil, and to what degree it would be diminished by a better moral environment; *e.g.* in the relatively simple instances of the spread of knowledge and of art. But in the actual circumstances it seems to be a direct result of moral evil, and of its resultant ignorance, that we become faced with moral demands which involve sudden, instead of gradual, modifications of complex personality which cannot be other than painful. On the other hand, a sound educational and moral training often results in a character which cherishes the higher good instinctively and attains it naturally with no regrets at sacrificing any lower good. This is sufficient, I think, to prove that moral good may, under proper conditions, be attained without suffering, and that its painful concomitants are not in themselves irrational, but rather the reverse. There must be taken into account also, in any adequate discussion, the reactive effect of sacrifice upon the moral person-

[1] *Cf.* p. 247, *ante.*

ality. No good, that is to say, conflicts with any other good; pain seems always the consequence of some intrusion of evil; the principle of the good, as Professor Hobhouse has recently argued, is harmony.

But can we call the universal process a moral process? Must not that judgement, indeed, be the prior ground of its claim upon personality? For if it, in itself, is not moral, how can we, freely as moral agents, obey its behests? There seems to me to arise here some danger of logical confusion. All our final judgements alike—of truth, beauty, value, morality—must refer to some criterion; but we cannot apply the term employed in the judgement to this criterion itself. We cannot therefore call the universal process moral. Nevertheless it is something higher and more real—it is the ground of the whole moral world and of all moral judgements. In the same way it is the ultimate source and criterion of truth and value;[1] only, as thus ultimate, it is rarely present within the judging mind; we fall back in practice upon standards which, while thoroughly sound and justifiable, nevertheless always represent that further standard which they themselves imply. If it be argued that we ought not to obey that which we cannot judge to be a moral demand, it must be asked whence our capacity to conceive and apply a moral standard of any kind has arisen? Its only possible source, ultimately, lies in that Whole which it is suggested we can judge; but we cannot raise, against the Whole, criteria which have originated from itself; any more, *e.g.*, than we can purchase the entire wealth of the world with money. To refuse to recognise the universal determination, again—much more to oppose it actively—must involve in the end the destruction

[1] *Cf.* p. 221, *ante*: "You do not value it; you value all else by it."

of the self, even as moral. This, however, raises the subject—beyond my present limits—of individual immortality. But the tendency must be resisted to interpret "universal determination" in any physical or material sense; it means, essentially, something spiritual.

It is therefore in my opinion illogical to describe the process of Reality as a "moral order." This result is not, however, philosophically defective. It is so only apparently, simply because our finitude compels us to express its nature in a negative form as "not moral"; always with the implication, however, that it is something higher than moral. Negations, of course, must be dispensed with so far as possible; so far, *i.e.*, as positive terms can be discovered to take their place. But no positive term whatever can be found adequately to describe the Universe; we can do no more than adopt the most profound terms at our command and then elucidate their significance by means of others more limited.[1] But this, again, is not a defect; it is rather the best possible evidence of the infinite perfection of Reality.

An argument on somewhat similar lines applies to personality. This term, however, seems to me to be more inclusive—comprehensive—profound—than *e.g.* moral. Personality would in that case approach nearer to the Wholeness of the Universe; but here a great deal obviously depends on definition.[2] But if the Whole is in any sense personal—spiritual—self-

[1] The only alternative is to refuse to employ any terms whatever as applicable to the Universe, as is done by some kinds of mysticism. But to do this is plainly to cease to think at all; it may be inevitable, but it is none the less unphilosophical.

[2] *Cf.* "A person to me must be finite, or must cease to be personal" (Mr. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 449). "Is man adequately described as a '*finite*' being? . . . Mr. Bradley ought not to debate this question on finite grounds" (Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 345).

conscious—then it enjoys a *transcendent* personality—spirituality—self-consciousness; and this, so far as the problem of moral obligation is concerned, means that it is of such a nature that from it there may proceed to the free personality those demands for its own continuous self-realisation of which we are conscious throughout our whole being—sensuously, emotionally and rationally—as the imperatives of duty.

INDEX

A priori, 9
Absolute, meaning of, 228 *sqq.*
Aristotle, ethics, 46 ; on the soul, 97 ; on mind, 202
Art and science, 16 *sqq.* ; and law, 245
Atoms, reality of, 193

Bergson, 9, 47, 92 ; on modern science, 25 ; on matter, 102 ; on indetermination, 111 *sqq.* ; on causation, 125 ; 169, 203, 225
Bosanquet, 5, 9, 123, 145, 177, 195, 202, 207
Bradley, A. C., 18, 158
Bradley, F. H., on desire, 144 ; on value, 221

Causation, 56, 76 *sqq.*, 91, 116 *sqq.*, 125
Certainty, 7 *sqq.* ; in ethics, Chap. II.
Clough, 50
Consciousness, 122 *sqq.*
Content and form, 15 *sqq.*
Continuity, 97 *sqq.*, 125, 135
Creation, 226
Croce, 195, 205

Desire, 33, 140 *sqq.*, 144 *sqq.*, 224
Determination, 87 *sqq.*, 104 *sqq.*, 112 *sqq.*, 262
Dynamic, the, 105 *sqq.*

Ethics and certainty, Chap. II. ; and metaphysics, 44
Evil, 273

Form, 13 *sqq.*, 25 *sqq.*
Freedom and necessity, 93 *sqq.* ; 119 *sqq.* ; and consciousness, 129, 263

Gibson, Boyce, viii, 6, 244, 267 *n.*

Haldane, Dr., 109
Haldane, Lord, 5
Hegel, on logic, 5 ; on certainty, 8 ; on Kant, 32 ; on nature and spirit, 70, 99 ; on desire, 145 ; on poetry, 176 ; on value, 221
Hobhouse, on desire, 145 ; on Hegelianism, 151 *sqq.* ; 248, 253 *sqq.*
Huxley, 109

Idea, 36, 42, 54
Idealism, 36, 42, 194
Ingression, 104
Intuition, 169 *sqq.*

Jones, ix, 172, 215, 224, 256

Kant, 25, 32 ; on freedom, 94 ; 238 *sqq.*, 248 *sqq.*

Law, 30, 256
Leibniz, 198, 205
Locke, 7
Logic, modern, 4 *sqq.*
Lotze, 101, 123, 209

Mathematics, 116
McTaggart, 47
Mechanism, 107 *sqq.*, 115 *sqq.*
Metaphysics, 6, 21 *sqq.*, 34 *sqq.*, 44
Mill, on duty, 2 ; on metaphysics, 21 ; on causation, 91 ; on freedom, 93 ; on obligation, 252
Mind and nature, 98 *sqq.*

Nature and mind, 98 *sqq.*
Necessity, 54, 91 *sqq.*

Objectivity and value, 140 *sqq.* ; of moral experience, 161 *sqq.* ; 223
Organisation, 87 *sqq.*

Personality, 235 *sqq.*, 264, 276
Pringle-Pattison, 125, 136 *sqq.*

Rationality and freedom, 131, 137; and intuition, 175 *sqq.*; 237 *sqq.*
Realism, 187 *sqq.*, 194
Reality and thought, 37; 54, 75, 218, 269
Relativity, 206 *sqq.*, 216, 229
Reyburn, ix
Richardson, 199 *sqq.*
Russell, 191 *sqq.*

Sacrifice, 273
Satisfaction, 145 *sqq.*
Science, 16, 25
Self-determination, 113 *sqq.*; and reason, 137; 233 *sqq.*, 242
Sidgwick, 11, 251
Subjectivity and value, 140 *sqq.*; 150

Taylor, 19, 21
Theology and metaphysics, 38
Thomson, 51, 74, 82, 98, 124
Thought and reality, 37
Time, 207

Universe, 83, 100 *sqq.*
Utilitarianism, 2, 86, 253

Value, 85, 141; and satisfaction, 146 *sqq.*; 179 *sqq.*

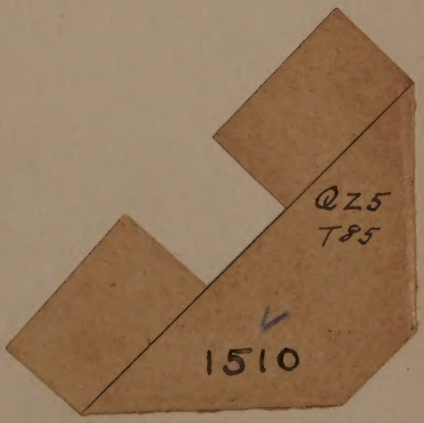
Wallace, 99, 176, 210
Ward, 52
Whitaker, 34, 94
Whitehead, 54, 67, 77, 104, 118, 192, 203, 215, 220
Whole, the, 225 *sqq.*, 231 *sqq.*, 262

THE END

Printed in Great Britain by R. & R. Clark, Limited, *Edinburgh.*

BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL

GTU Library
3 2400 00721 7189



GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500
All items are subject to recall